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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of four issues of a quarterly publication presenting information related to the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. Regularly appearing features of the publication include a calendar of Reggio conferences; information on the Reggio Children organization, contacts, exhibit schedule, and study tours; and a partial listing of resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy. The Winter 2002 issue includes articles on the Hundred Languages of Children exhibit as a catalyst for learning and cooperation in the United States and Canada, building communication and understanding among North American educators, developmentally appropriate practice and the Reggio Emilia approach, and issues in collaboration from a Canadian perspective. The Spring 2002 issue includes articles reflecting on the process of professional development and program evolution in three schools, and a book review of "Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care" (Lella Gandini and Carolyn Pope Edwards, Eds.). The Summer 2002 issue includes articles on the role of culture and community in children's learning and development, and the formation of the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. The Fall 2002 issue includes articles on collaborative professional development and a book review of Brenda Fyfe's "Making Learning Visible." (KB)

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Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange, 2002.

Vol. 9, No. 1-4 Win-Fall, 2002

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Lella Gandini, Associate Editor

Merrill-Palmer Institute
Wayne State University

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Innovations
in early education: *the international reggio exchange*
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DEVELOPING A DIALOGUE WITH EDUCATORS

Inspired by the Experience of the Reggio Emilia Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools

By Amelia Gambetti with the collaboration of Paola Riccò

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Hundred Languages of Children Exhibit: A Catalyst for Learning and Cooperation in the United States and Canada

Building Communication and Understanding Among North American Educators Inspired by the Reggio Emilia Educational Philosophy

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Meets Reggio Emilia: A Story of Collaboration in All Its Meanings

Trees Dotting the Landscape: Issues in Collaboration from a Canadian Perspective

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Amelia Gambetti is coordinator of Reggio Children and liaison for consultancy in schools. Paola Riccò is Reggio Children international exchanges executive.

From an idea of Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, Reggio Children was established in 1994 with the aim of protecting and promoting the wealth of experience accumulated over many years of work in the field of early childhood education in Reggio Emilia. From 1994 through 2001, Reggio Children has welcomed to Reggio Emilia more than 10,000 participants in study groups coming from more than 54 countries throughout the world. Whenever we revisit this part of our history, we have mixed feelings. We feel very pleased and very honored, even satisfied and proud but the most important feeling we have relates to the concept of responsibility. In Reggio Emilia, we all feel very responsible for the experience we have created through many years of hard work. The first municipal preschool (children 3-6) was opened in 1963; the first municipal infant-toddler center (children 0-3) was opened in 1971. Today, in Reggio Emilia, we have 21 municipal preschools and 13 municipal infant-toddler centers. During these 38 years of history, the municipality of Reggio Emilia has continued to be committed to this experience despite many difficult problems and challenging obstacles. The municipality of Reggio Emilia has made a political choice that clearly shows a great deal of investment in childhood.

When visitors from all over the world come to Reggio Emilia, they have the opportunity to encounter the experience of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools. In fact, an encounter is what we would like to offer to them every time they come. Through the organization of study groups and other initiatives, Reggio Children would like to provoke dialogues among different cultures of the world, with a great deal of respect for what the encounter can offer to all of us. We feel pleased and honored by the expectations, the curiosity and the interest of our visitors, but above all, we feel responsible for what we will be capable of shar-

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ing about our experience and what we will be able to help them to know about us. During the time we spend together, we like to talk about values, points of view and perspectives we have or would like to have about culture, society, and experiences of work in the field of education and life. We like to think of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia as an ongoing system of interactions and relationships, where concepts such as circularity, reciprocity, democracy, communication, exchange, sharing, collaboration, cooperation, professional development, participation in the life of the school, quality of organization are, first of all, values shared by the three main protagonists of the experience: children, teachers and parents.

These values, concepts and contents are also at the basis of the encounter with other educators. When these visiting educators come to Reggio, they bring with them the history of their life, their work, their reality, their culture, their society, their context, their expectations, their desires, their wishes. One of our major goals is to try to establish a dialogue that can help all of us to begin to talk, to continue to talk and to share, even after they leave Reggio. Quite often, our visitors leave with more questions than answers. But these questions will help them to develop answers that will include their experience in Reggio, their experience in their own contexts and new connections they will be able to find. The encounter with educators from around the world is an incredible and powerful tool of professional development for the educators of Reggio Emilia. In fact, through the questions they ask, through the observations they make, through the comments they share, we learn more about the motivations of our actions and how to communicate our work, and we understand more about the depth of our experiences. The points of view of those who visit Reggio has helped us to understand more who we are, where we are at, in which direction we would like to go and why. We like to look at Reggio Emilia as a place where all these encounters support an exchange about education, about the image of the child, the image of the school, the image of the educators, the image of ourselves. Can it also imply a positive image about the future of the society? Can it be a message of hope that especially now, we need to have, we have the right to have and we want to have, considering what has been happening in the world we are all part of? We truly hope so.

The collaboration and the exchange with the United States have a long history with deep roots. The first exchanges took place early in the 1980s and they have developed in many directions. "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit, which came to the U.S. for the first time in 1987, has been an important and challenging channel of communication and information. Over the years, many educators from Reggio Emilia have come to the States to share their experiences and hundreds of educators from the U.S. have traveled to Reggio to be a part of study groups. Angela Ferrario, U.S. Liaison for the organization of study groups to Reggio, began to organize study groups of 30-40 people in the 1980s. In May 2001, she organized a study group with 250 people. In the United States and Canada, there is an increased interest, curiosity and demand to encounter Reggio, to establish a dialogue with Reggio, to develop a dialogue with Reggio, to study and to research about Reggio. In almost all of the 50 states, there are educators who have shown their interest in the Reggio Emilia municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, and have seen our experience as a source of inspiration for building relationships with their own contexts and experiences. Pride and responsibility are still the major feelings we have whenever we consider the magnitude of interest in our work among American educators.

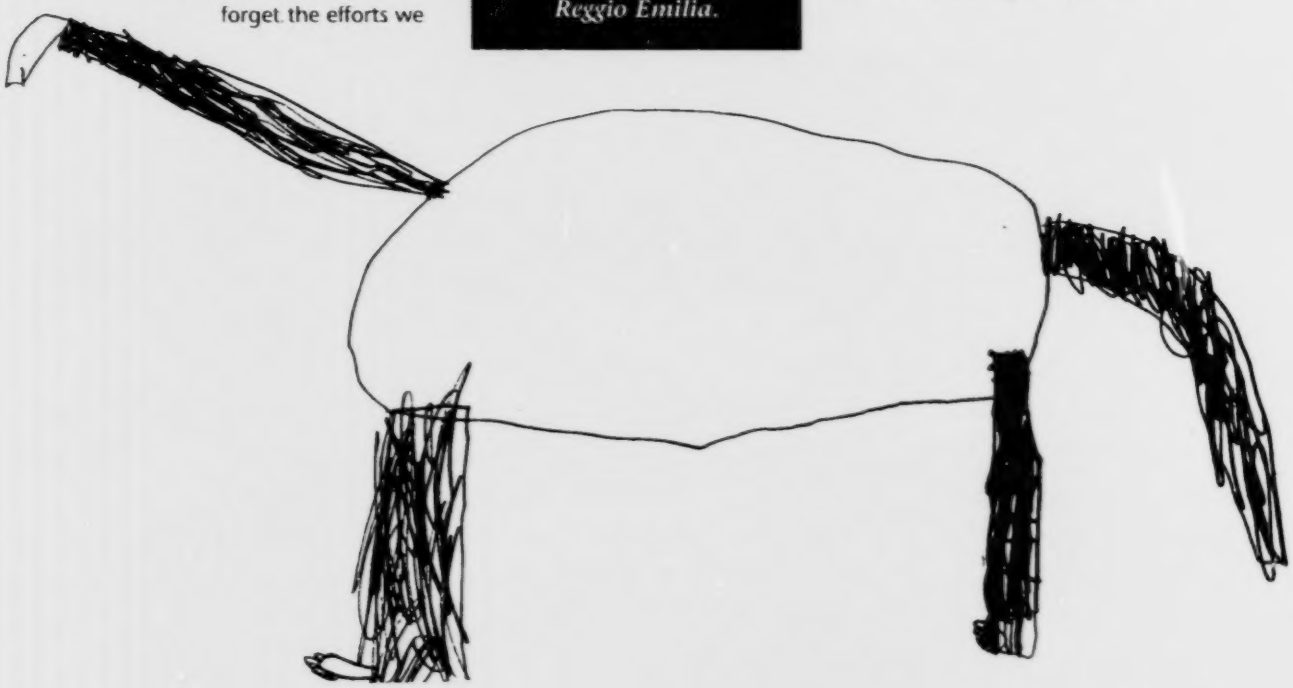
The history of the relationship and the intensity of the dialogues we have established through the years with U.S. and Canadian educators have supported the development of our experiences together. The contagious enthusiasm that these educators bring to Reggio encourages us to further develop these relationships. We believe that it is important for study, research, theory and practice to be continuously woven together with ongoing experiences that could take place in schools. Schools and infant-toddler centers offer a powerful context where actions of sharing and exchange can provoke interesting dialogues that can help all of us to develop new ideas about children, parents, the role of the teachers and the role of education. Contexts are different, the locations of the centers are different, the origins of the relationships are different but when and if a dialogue between Reggio and these centers is established, we always look at differences and similarities as important aspects that can help us to give new values to our actions. If we learn how to respect each other, if we learn how to give dignity to our actions, if we can look at our professional-

ism from other points of view, then we can analyze our work and our style of working in a more complex way. Can consideration of the meaning and relevance of words such as - motivation, change, history, communication, collaboration, exchange, effort, investment, energy, commitment, encouragement, frustration, discouragement, satisfaction, richness, openness, availability, opportunities, possibilities, curiosity, interest, observation, reflection, visibility, participation, collegiality, hope, passion, solidarity, trust, confidence, modesty, humility, generosity - support us to construct and develop experiences together?

If we think of the centers we collaborate with in Chicago, IL/Chicago Commons; St.Paul, MN/MacDonald Montessori School; Boulder, CO/Make a Mess and Make Believe; St.Louis, MO/ The Clayton Schools' Family Center, The College School, The St. Michael School; Columbus, OH/Columbus School for Girls; Santa Monica, CA/ The First Presbyterian Nursery School; Miami, FL/L'Atelier; Washington, DC/World Bank Children's Center, and new experiences in Atlanta, GA and in San Francisco, CA, we cannot forget the efforts we all have made to share our experiences and to build new ones that are based on a strong reciprocal respect. Each of us has had and has something to offer that continually generates new ideas and new ways of looking at each other with open minds and new perspectives. These centers don't like to call themselves "Reggio schools," they prefer to let their own identity, their own contexts, the origins of their own experiences emerge. They prefer to reinforce the concept of respect for what they believe in and for what they have been since their beginnings.

The encounter with educators from around the world is an incredible and powerful tool of professional development for the educators of Reggio Emilia.

The experience of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools has been an important source of inspiration for the dialogue established with these centers. It has not offered them a model to be copied; it has instead offered them a support for learning more how to express themselves and to give strength to their own identities. In order to achieve these levels of collaboration, it has taken a great deal of time, availability and commitment from both sides. We are particularly grateful for our work together, which has helped us to achieve positive results and to construct meaningful experiences.



"The Hundred Languages of Children" Exhibit: *A Catalyst for Learning and Cooperation in the United States and Canada*

By Lella Gandini and Pamela Houk

Lella Gandini is the Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach and adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Pamela Houk is a private consultant for museum education and exhibit design, and the project manager of exhibits at the Wright Brothers Aviation Center of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in Dayton, Ohio. Pam was the Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for the "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit from 1992 to 1998.

A bit of history

Lella Gandini

In 1976, while in Italy for a year, I was asked to write an article for the Italian educational journal, *Zerosei (Zero to Six*, which later became *Bambini)*, edited by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the program for young children in Reggio Emilia. Although I knew about the schools for young children in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, this was my first formal contact with Malaguzzi. In the years that followed, I had many occasions to visit the Reggio municipal preschools and infant-toddler centers, as educators throughout Europe began to discover the extraordinary educational work in this northern region of Italy. In the early 1980s, I began presenting to U.S. educators about the advanced development of early childhood education in Italy and in Reggio, in particular.

In 1983, the seeds of a network in the United States were planted in Italy. First, I introduced Carolyn Edwards, who was in Italy on sabbatical from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to Loris Malaguzzi, Carlina Rinaldi [at that time, a *pedagogista* or education coordinator with the Reggio early childhood program; currently, pedagogical consultant for Reggio Children] and Sergio Spaggiari [at that time, director of early childhood programs, Department of Education, Municipality of Reggio Emilia; currently, director, Department of Education in Reggio]. Next, Carolyn and I met Baji Rankin, who was doing research on Italian early education programs, during a visit to one of the first versions of the exhibit, then called, "When the Eye Jumps over the Wall" and later renamed, "The Hundred Languages of Children." Initially developed from an idea of Loris Malaguzzi, the exhibit was realized through a great deal of collaborative work and creative construction of the minds and hands of the wonderful people - *atelieristi* [studio teachers], teachers and designers - who were participants in the experience of the municipal preschools and infant-toddler centers in Reggio Emilia. After these encounters, Carolyn, Baji and I began to work on sharing this experience with American educators and researchers, and to explore ways for the exhibit to be brought to the United States.

First attempts to bring the exhibit to the U.S.

In 1984, I published an article for *Beginnings* (later integrated into *Childcare Information Exchange*) about the preschools in Reggio Emilia. This article included a message about the exhibit with an invitation to educators to write me for information. Many letters arrived from teachers wanting to know more about the Reggio early childhood program and the exhibit, and we were very encouraged. One location that seemed promising for an exhibit venue was Wheelock College, where Baji Rankin was teaching. With her help, I did a presentation for their faculty, students and area teachers that was made into a videotape for prospective supporters. The same videotape was later used by the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibits department, a group that Carolyn Edwards had approached. The Smithsonian group's director, Matu Goodwin, decided to visit the schools in Reggio. Howard Gardner, of Harvard University, whom I had inter-

viewed for *Zero to Six*, wanted to do the same. I was fortunate to accompany them both to Reggio Emilia in June 1985. This was an eventful visit. The encounter of Howard Gardner and Loris Malaguzzi, the seminars and the dialogues as well as the many gatherings were memorable for the Americans and for the educators of Reggio Emilia. Although no decision about the future of the exhibit in North America was made at the time, the Harvard Graduate School of Education offered their library as an exhibit venue and established the support that Howard Gardner has continued to give to the Reggio Emilia educators and their schools.

The exhibit arrives on North American soil

Nineteen eighty seven [1987] was a landmark year for relations between the United States and Reggio Emilia. The Emilia Romagna regional government sent a variety of exhibits about the products, arts and crafts of the region to San Francisco. Loris Malaguzzi was invited to include the exhibit about the preschools of Reggio Emilia. A new version of the exhibit, which had previously traveled to Sweden in 1981, was sent to San Francisco and a beautiful new catalogue was printed. Loris Malaguzzi traveled to the United States for the first time and was a bit surprised to see that the exhibit was set up in Ghirardelli Square.

The second venue for "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit was Fort Worth, Texas. This effort was organized by the city of Fort Worth in collaboration with the city of Reggio Emilia, as the two are sister cities. Bicycle races, and a tasting of Parmigiano Reggiano and Lambrusco wine accompanied the exhibition. Sergio Spaggiari was invited to Fort Worth for the occasion and found a large banner across the hall entrance that mistakenly announced a Montessori exhibit from Italy. As a result, Sergio became aware of the interest in Montessori schools in the United States.

Following the exhibit's stay in these two venues, Malaguzzi and his colleagues asked me to facilitate the transition of the exhibit from one location to the next. The exhibit traveled to Syracuse University with Becky New's support; to Amherst, Massachusetts where Carolyn Edwards, George Forman and I had the pleasure of hosting Loris Malaguzzi and Tiziana Filippini [*pedagogista* in the Reggio early childhood program]; to Boston where Baji Rankin truly performed miracles in order for Carlina, Sergio, Amelia Gambetti [at that time, a teacher at La Villetta School in Reggio; currently, Reggio Children coordinator and liaison for consultancy in schools] and Giovanni Piazza [*atelierista* at La Villetta] to be there for the opening. Then the exhibit traveled to White Plains, New York; to Washington D.C.; to Dayton, Ohio with Pamela Houk's support; to Detroit with the collaboration of Rosalyn and Eli Saltz; to St. Louis with Brenda Fyfe's support; to Oklahoma City with the collaboration of Joanne Hendrick; to Memphis and Salt Lake City. In order to provide information about content and practical matters like size and dimensions, I prepared a packet of information that included suggestions about transportation and insurance. I also tried to maintain the connections between each site and the educators of Reggio Emilia. Fortunately, in 1992, Pamela Houk, a curator at the Dayton Art Institute, offered her help. She accepted with great skill, dedication, patience and competence, the responsibility for facilitating the exhibit through many more travels and installations of great success at many different venues.

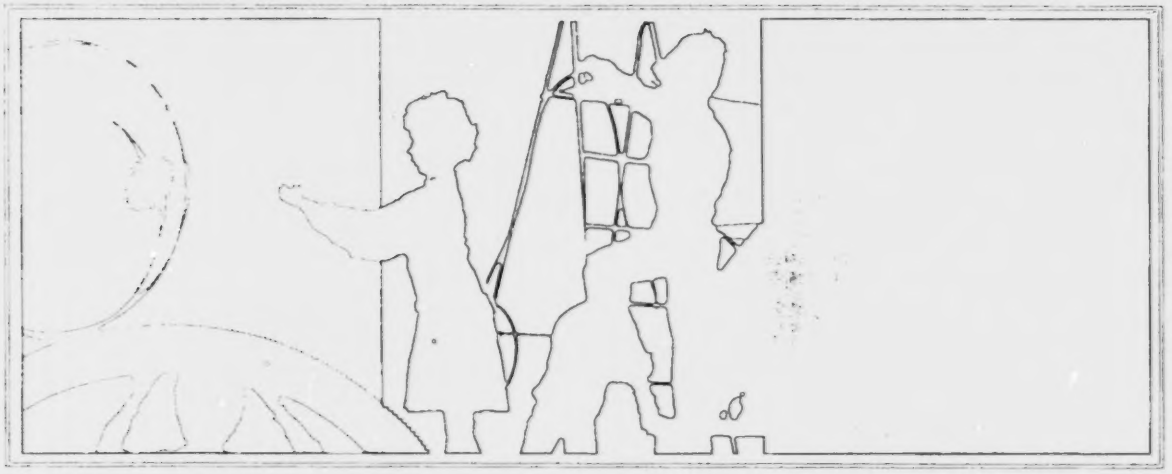
Finding the message: for all early childhood educators, and art teachers in particular
Pamela Houk

[adapted from "Lessons from an Exhibition: Reflections of an Art Educator," First Steps Toward Teaching the Reggio Way, *(1997), J. Hendrick, ed.]*

Among the many messages that begin to emerge from the exhibit and motivate audiences to learn more about Reggio Emilia schools for young children, several are of special interest to art educators, as well as the rest of us.

This is an approach that puts great emphasis on listening to children. Their words are everywhere. In sections of the exhibit, the sequences of children's works and words suggest that they have been encouraged to revisit and rethink a particular observation or idea.

- Reggio educators truly understand the importance of giving children opportunities to communicate what they are thinking. Before they can read and write, children are encouraged to express their understandings in symbolic languages - drawing, painting, clay modeling, collage, performance and so on.
- Reggio's approach to "art" for children is a definite departure from what many teachers are taught, and challenges many assumptions. Inherent in Reggio's very different way of viewing image making by children is the contrast in expectations



of what children are capable of doing at different stages in their development. One has only to study Victor Lowenfeld's developmental drawing charts (Lowenfeld, 1975), often referred to in classes for primary teachers and art educators, and the drawings of average children in Reggio Emilia.

- The exhibit inspires many who see it to greatly expand the diversity of materials they make available to children, and also challenges teachers to use their environments and creative potentials more resourcefully.
- The exhibition illustrates the documentation process in which teachers in Reggio engage as an ongoing way of working. From the beginning of a project, words and images are put together in well-designed displays throughout the schools. These are presented in engaging ways that inform parents and provoke children to ask more questions, participate in more discussion and pursue further explorations. Methods of documentation include photographs, transcribed tape recordings, videotapes and, of course, the children's own work. These kinds of materials are used in a variety of ways before they are returned to the children, filed or displayed as completed projects.
- The impact of visual experiences on a child's intellectual and creative growth is among the most innovative and challenging proposals in the exhibition and is worth examining in some detail. Considering that children use their eyes as well as other senses to help identify, investigate, sort out and think, Loris Malaguzzi proposed that visual experiences through active learning strategies are important from a very early age. He suggested that these strategies should be included as part of every educational project, and saw a wealth of benefits from giving children tools that 1) empower them to think for themselves in both creative and rational ways; 2) help them develop emotional maturity and sensitivity to the world around them; and 3) free them from the limitations of passive perception that is so common in today's children.

It is helpful to see this exhibit as a complex situation that, like many others, requires careful consideration and accurate interpretation - abilities educators need to develop in order to understand children's behavior. When visitors practice this skill by carefully "reading" both the images and the words in "The Hundred Languages of Children," and take time to contemplate its lessons, they invariably experience a sense of breaking through a barrier to reach new understanding. Among the exhibition's greatest gifts to adults is its invitation to slow down, listen to children, and reflect on what they are telling us about what they perceive and what we have yet to understand.

How does the exhibit communicate the experience of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia?
Lella Gandini

The exhibit of the work of educators, children, parents and citizens of Reggio Emilia, which was re-examined and dynamically updated in 1999, "is a beautiful intriguing display that narrates an educational story and weaves together experiences, reflections, debates, theoretical premises, and the social and ethical ideals

of many generations of teachers, children and parents. It describes and illustrates the philosophy and pedagogy of the Reggio Emilia approach through photographs depicting moments of teaching and learning; explanatory scripts and panels, many containing texts of children's words, and samples of children's painting, drawings, collages and constructions with many media. As a medium of communication, the exhibit is wonderfully suited . . . " (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998). The exhibit brought a sense of surprise and discovery about the potentials of children and teachers to each community who hosted it. As a consequence, the experience of the exhibit engendered a desire among teachers to become better educators, and to advocate for the learning and well-being of young children.

In response to the interest of many American educators, the exhibit now stays in one location for an extended period of time. The intent is to facilitate new ways of encountering the exhibit by offering in-depth possibilities and opportunities for professional development, and by creating an environment that facilitates study of the Reggio educational philosophy within the exhibit itself. Experience has shown us that for the exhibit to more effectively support professional development, two elements should be in place. First, a preparatory series of encounters and meetings should be organized to make the ideas and experiences from the Reggio Emilia schools known and understood. Educators who have participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia as well as conferences and seminars in the United States can support these meetings. Second, the exhibit needs to be accompanied by the guiding voice of qualified interpreters in order to make explicit and understandable the complex layers of messages that are carried by its many languages. Where this has occurred, many constructive and positive initiatives and changes have taken place, often as a direct consequence of the interest created by the presence of the exhibit. These include:

- the evolution of programs for young children studying the Reggio Emilia approach through changes in their way of seeing and listening to children, in their environment, their organization and use of time, and by truly looking at their way of working with new eyes, with energy and cooperation
- the creation of this periodical, *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange*
- new designs for professional development with strong expectations from teachers and deep respect for them
- receipt of grant funding to support the exploration and study of the Reggio philosophy (Danforth and Jennings Foundations, etc.)
- hiring and preparation of studio teachers and pedagogical coordinators as a part of the system of schools
- publication of articles and books with interpretations of the various experiences connected with the translation of the Reggio Emilia approach to other contexts
- national media coverage (CNN, National Public Radio, etc.)
- interest developed in the education department of some states (i.e., Ohio) and influence in state governments (i.e., Ohio supporting programs in public schools, Massachusetts' establishment of charter schools, and Kentucky making connections with the Reform Act)
- college courses using the exhibit as a site and focus for learning
- organization of study groups and round table discussion groups
- increased interest in the organization of study tours to Reggio Emilia

Throughout the history of the exhibit in the United States, I have been invited to speak about the wonderful approach, the ideas and the strategies of teachers, parents and children of Reggio Emilia. I have been present at 28 of the 36 sites where the exhibit has been located. This exhibit has become a true friend, one to which I am attached visually and emotionally. In each place, it wears slightly different clothing and tells the story of the children and adults of Reggio Emilia with a different accent. I witnessed "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit renewing itself in each place as it reflected and reverberated the care and interest of the people who prepared it for exhibition, so that it could communicate respect for children and hope for everyone.

Reference
"The Hundred Languages of Children' Exhibit, hosted by Inspired Practices in Early Education through a collaboration with Reggio Children, Italy," November/December 2000, a booklet highlighting the history of the exhibit with contributions from those who collaborated in hosting it in the U.S. and Canada, edited by Margie Keith Cooper, Ph.D.

Building COMMUNICATION and UNDERSTANDING Among North American Educators Inspired by the Reggio Emilia Educational Philosophy

By Judith Allen Kaminsky

Judith Allen Kaminsky is the editor of Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange, *published by The Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.*

During the 1998 Reggio Children Summer Institute (in collaboration with the Innovative Teacher Project) at Mills College in Oakland, California, Lella Gandini, the Reggio Children Liaison in the U.S. for Dissemination of the Reggio Emilia Approach, initiated a survey regarding interest in the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy titled, "A Map of Interest in the Reggio Emilia Approach in the United States and Canada." The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of the interest of North American educators to enable North American and Italian educators to communicate more effectively. The survey consisted of four questions:

1. *Are there teachers in schools in your area or state that are studying the Reggio Emilia approach?*
2. *Are there teachers that meet to discuss and reflect on the theory and practice introduced by educators from Reggio Emilia?*
3. *Are there conferences, lectures, courses focused on the Reggio Emilia approach that are taught in colleges, community colleges or universities in your area or state?*
4. *Are you familiar with any publications, articles, etc. about the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy?*

Lella asked me to coordinate the responses from participants of the Summer Institute, and to solicit further response from educators across the United States and Canada. In the fall of 1998, I posted the survey questions on the Reggio listserv and received numerous responses. The survey questions were also published in two issues of *Innovations* in Summer/Fall 1999 and Winter/Spring 2000. In November 1999, NAEYC conference participants were invited to respond to the survey during various Reggio-related seminars and sessions. In May 2000, I contacted over 60 North American Reggio Network contacts, asked them to send the survey to colleagues in their state or province, and communicate their responses to me. In July 2000, during the Reggio Children Summer Institute (in collaboration with Make a Mess and Make Believe) in Boulder, Colorado, Lella and I again invited participants to respond to this survey of interest in the Reggio educational philosophy. In October 2000, I compiled a summary of over two years of responses to this survey and shared the information with Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Children Coordinator and Liaison for Consultancy in Schools.

The summary reflected the experience and knowledge of 85 educators from 32 states and the District of Columbia in the United States, five educators from three provinces in Canada, and one educator from Mexico. Our hope was to gather a body of information that was representative of interest in study and practice related to the Reggio philosophy in the North American context. During the two and a half years of gathering responses to this survey, it became increasingly apparent that this would have to be an ongoing initiative if it were to be representative or respectful of the evolution of the experience of early childhood educators in the U.S. and Canada. Lella and I became concerned about publishing in 2001 or 2002, a summary of responses for a survey conducted in 1998-2000. Because of the evolution of the experience, the results were almost out-of-date by the time they were compiled. We were also hesitant to summarize the responses since it was apparent that the number of responses did not represent the number of educators interested in the Reggio experience in North America. Yet despite multiple requests made through the use of various means (institutes, listserv, *Innovations*, conferences, network contacts), we felt we had not generated a response that truly represented the experience of North American educators studying the Reggio educational philosophy.

Yet the survey process enabled us to identify and communicate with educators throughout the U.S. and Canada with serious interest in the Reggio approach and whose practice has been influenced over time, as a result. It is vital for this group of educators to understand the experiences of others in the North American early childhood community in order to provide perspective for our ongoing professional development. What is equally important is the motivation and opportunity these attempts at strengthening our communication and understanding provide for building relationships within a state or province, often where the communication is weakest. Our closest colleagues (geographically) can offer the best and most practical possibilities to build collaboration and challenge us with multiple perspectives and diverse experience, which can only enhance our work with children, teachers and families. We need the opportunity to regularly meet with fellow teachers to share our experiences, the challenges and frustrations, discoveries and joys of our daily work with children and adults. We need partners in order to create professional development initiatives in the form of seminars and study groups that can offer us an ongoing source of inspiration and renewal. Are we doing everything we can to form these relationships?

We need the opportunity to regularly meet with fellow teachers to share our experiences, the challenges and frustrations, discoveries and joys of our daily work with children and adults.

There are many existing means for maintaining meaningful and ongoing communication about the work of educators in the U.S. and Canada who are inspired by the philosophy and practice of the Reggio educators. Among others, we have these tools for communication:

- seminars, conferences, study groups presenting evolving experiences in schools and universities in the U.S., Canada and Italy
- Reggio listserv for sharing experiences in schools, university classes, job openings, resources information
- web sites:
  - ERIC Clearinghouse, including a list of Reggio-inspired schools and related resources
  - The Merrill-Palmer Institute's Reggio resource section, including Reggio-related conference calendar, "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit schedule, print and video resources, Reggio Children and North American Reggio Network contact information
  - potential for links with web sites of resource distributors:
    - Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
    - *Child Care Information Exchange*
    - Learning Materials Workshop
  - schools and universities interested in study of the Reggio philosophy
- print resources:
  - periodicals, like *Innovations*
  - local newsletters from schools, network groups
  - journals, like *Child Care Information Exchange and Young Children*

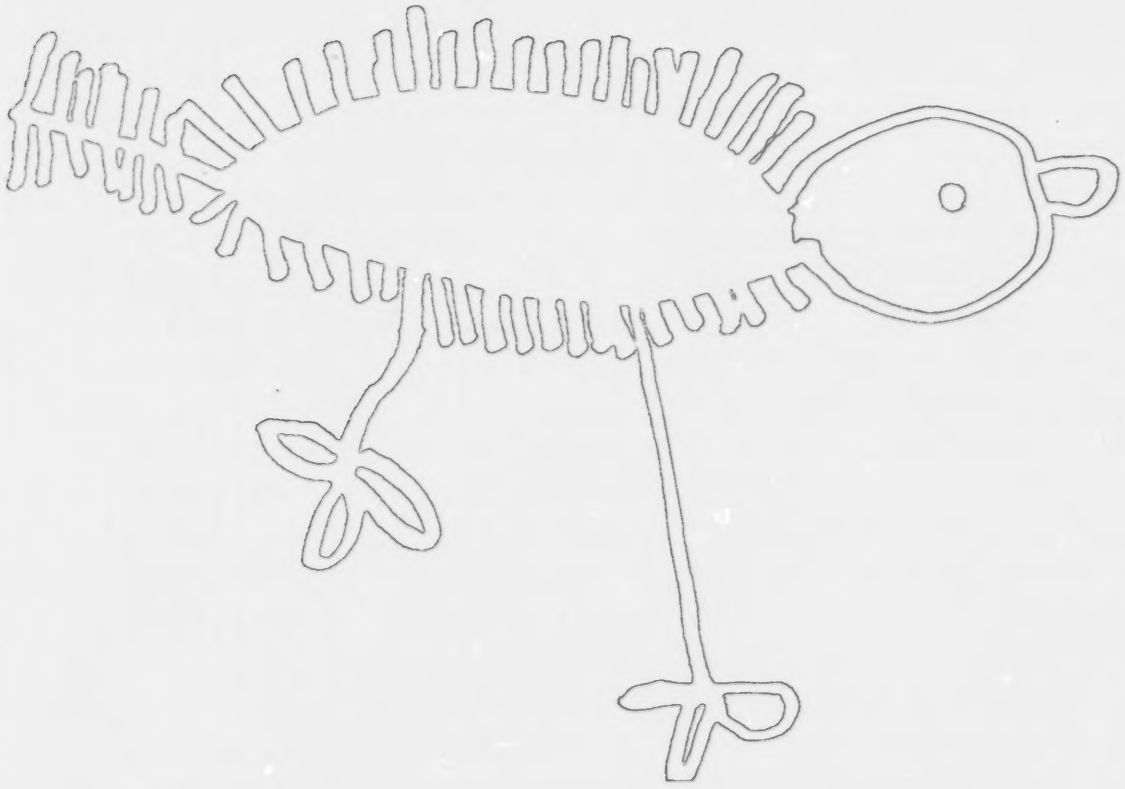
Because the awareness of this way of teaching and learning has become so pervasive, it is desirable to continue meaningful and effective communication regarding:

- teachers and schools in specific areas that are studying the Reggio philosophy
- established study groups related to the Reggio philosophy
- universities and colleges:
  - with courses including or focused on the Reggio philosophy and practice
  - where teacher education curriculums have been influenced by the Reggio philosophy
  - with lab schools whose practice has been inspired by the Reggio philosophy
- conferences, seminars, workshops related to the Reggio philosophy and practice

- new print and video resources related to the Reggio philosophy-information provided by author(s), journals and readers
- study tours of schools in U.S. and Canada
- American educators available for consulting-including experience and qualifications

This kind of information could be regularly posted on the Reggio listserv.

As important as it is for North American educators to understand the experience of colleagues within their state or province, country and continent, it is just as essential for educators in Reggio Emilia to be aware of the work of educators in the U.S. and Canada that is related to their philosophy and experience. It is vital for schools, universities, conference organizers and authors to communicate with Reggio Children about their work. The more complete Reggio Children's understanding of the North American experience, the better able they are to communicate with our community and to respond to interest from the United States and Canada in the form of conferences, seminars, study tours, exhibit plans, consultation and other collaborative efforts. Reggio Children is aware that their philosophy and experiences have inspired and influenced the work of educators in many educational and cultural contexts. It is with interest and appreciation that they wish to share in the evolution of the lives of the children, teachers and families in these contexts. Whether it be our school community or the global community, our efforts to strengthen communication and understanding among early childhood educators inspired by the Reggio philosophy can only enhance the meaning and value of our work.



Developmentally Appropriate Practice Meets Reggio Emilia:
A Story of Collaboration in All Its Meanings

By Sue Bredekamp

Sue Bredekamp is director of research at the Council for Professional Recognition and previously worked with the National Association for the Education of Young Children from 1981 to 1998. Sue participated in study tours to the Reggio Emilia municipal early childhood program in 1993, 1994 and 2001.

For more than a decade, the Reggio Emilia approach has had a significant impact on early childhood education in North America. Prior to that, of course, the work done in Reggio Emilia's infant-toddler programs and preschools was well-known and influential throughout other parts of the world. Each of the thousands of North American early childhood educators has a story to tell about their experience encountering practices in Reggio Emilia.

This article describes my own story and its impact on my professional work. First, I relate my experiences and how they transformed much of my thinking, both personally and professionally. Then, I describe the ways in which the Reggio Emilia approach, and what we have learned from our colleagues there, influenced the process and content of revising *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Finally, I discuss the value and need for communication and collaboration among early childhood educators in the U.S. and Canada as we strive to improve professional development. All these experiences involve collaboration on many levels.

The Meaning of Collaboration

As a former English major, I always begin writing with Webster's dictionary, which reminds us that collaboration has both positive and negative connotations. Its most common usage is "to work or act jointly toward a common end, especially in literary, scientific or other intellectual production." The secondary definition is "to cooperate voluntarily as a nation with another nation." Both these definitions apply at a general level to the work that has occurred between educators in Reggio Emilia and North America. The international collaboration has had many significant positive effects and produced outstanding intellectual work toward the common goals of improving the early education of young children and helping them reach their fullest potentials.

The negative connotation of collaboration is less often used, but would be familiar to survivors of World War II and certainly to the founders and early community of the Reggio schools. This definition is "to comply with, cooperate with, or assist willingly the conquerors occupying one's country." I find these paradoxical definitions of collaboration intriguing because, in my experience, collaboration is both a positive and a negative process - it requires being challenged as well as challenging, giving up parts of your own world view in order to accept parts of someone else's, and being willing to trust the process and its unpredictable outcome.

During the 18 years that I worked for the National Association for the Education of Young Children, I had many opportunities to work collaboratively with diverse groups and individuals whose ideas conflicted with my own. This type of work was the hardest I've ever done, but it also achieved the best results. For example, I had the privilege of working for several years with representatives of the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC). Simply stated, DEC wanted more special education knowledge for general early childhood educators and NAEYC wanted more general early childhood knowledge for special educators - somewhat conflicting goals. To move forward, collaboration was required in which each group had to listen to and learn from the other, negotiate differences and arrive at mutually agreeable solutions that reflected compromise to some extent.

In my experience, collaboration is not the same as cooperation. Cooperation is striving to work together toward a shared goal, ignoring or setting aside differences, if necessary, to obtain agreement. Collaboration, on the other hand, is different people bringing their own abilities and perspectives to a project, with the final product enriched by the differences and not necessarily conforming to the collaborators' preconceived notions. First and foremost, collaboration requires listening to the other's point of view, and articulating your own without becoming defensive - difficult skills indeed.

Having reflected on the standard definitions of collaboration, I rethought the way the term is used in Reggio as well as in practice in North America. My interpretation is that collaboration is used to describe the process of teachers and children (or any two groups such as teachers and parents) working and learning together. In this sense, collaboration is the process of social construction. This definition omits direct reference to a common goal. The goal itself may not be specifically defined at the outset. In fact, the collaborative process may reshape the goal. Collaboration is not just working together, it is also learning together so the outcome cannot be narrowly defined at the outset. In true collaboration, both parties learn and change as a result of the process. My own encounters with Reggio Emilia included several collaboration opportunities from which I learned and changed a great deal.

Collaborating with Reggio Educators: A Transformational Learning Experience

While at NAEYC, I served as Director of Accreditation and Professional Development. I was responsible for the association's work on setting standards for programs for young children, such as accreditation and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), and for preparation of teachers. Accreditation was developed to provide a national standard for high quality programs, in response to the wide-range of licensing standards and the generally poor quality of child care programs in America. The first edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Bredekamp, 1987) was a position statement, written in a socio-political context in response to particular issues, to help interpret accreditation standards and, especially, in response to the trend toward push-down curriculum, and away from child-initiated learning and play in preschool and kindergarten.

In the early 1980s, the early childhood field initially embraced this work. However, by the early 1990s, much of this work, especially the concept of developmentally appropriate practice, had come under considerable criticism. Among the criticisms were that the construct ignored the role of culture in development and learning, downplayed the teacher's role, was not responsive for children with disabilities, overemphasized the individual child and underemphasized relationships with families. This criticism came from all sectors but included strong voices from those most familiar with the Reggio approach. One memorable event during these years was a debate during the 1992 NAEYC conference when Lilian Katz and I defended DAP, and Rebecca New and Bruce Mallory asserted their contentions that the document did not reflect what is known about culture, social constuctivism or inclusion of children with special needs. At the end of the heated exchange, many said Lilian and I had "won" this debate. Sadly, I didn't feel victorious. I knew that both Becky and Bruce were correct in their criticisms. It was clear that the DAP position statement needed revision. But as the individual responsible for completing this work, I was overwhelmed and suffering from severe writer's block. That night, I realized that I had been so busy defending DAP against what I thought were misinterpretations that I hadn't been able to hear the truth in the criticisms.

At the same time, I was learning more about Reggio Emilia. In my time at NAEYC, I was privileged to work with and learn from some of the key leaders in our field. My introduction to Reggio Emilia came from conversations with Rebecca New and Lilian Katz, who had visited Reggio several times and were among the first to interpret the Reggio approach for American audiences. Then in 1992, Brenda Fyfe, who had begun exploring the principles in transforming the lab school at her university, personally guided me through "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit in St. Louis. So before ever encountering Reggio directly, I had the chance to hear about and discuss its principles with informed colleagues.

Then in 1993, my friend Teri Rosegrant and I had the privilege of visiting Reggio as part of a Canadian delegation organized by Cathleen Smith. Ours was the second to last English-speaking delegation to visit

Reggio prior to Loris Malaguzzi's death. We were a truly international delegation, which added to the depth of the experience. We were able to experience what we saw and heard from our own cultural perspectives as well as those of many other countries. This made the learning much more collaborative; our thinking was being challenged from many directions. During the week, a movie was being made about Malaguzzi's life, so we had much more of his time than was usually available to delegations. Then shortly after our return, I attended a seminar in Washington, DC conducted by Loris and other Reggio educators.

During our time in Reggio, Teri and I got very little sleep. We talked into the wee hours of the night, debating what we had learned and rethinking our prior assumptions about teaching and learning. Several things were especially challenging for me personally. I remember sitting by Malaguzzi at dinner and hearing him say that they respect the work of Piaget, but they reject the way Piaget sliced the child into stages like a sausage! I can still see his hand whipping through the air like a cleaver. I found myself feeling embarrassed that I had written a book that divided teaching practices into two seemingly discrete columns - appropriate and inappropriate.

Seeing the widespread evidence of children's cognitive competence in the documentation, I began to regret that in our attempts to protect children from narrow academic curriculum, we had underestimated children's intellectual capabilities. I also found myself rethinking the teacher's role. American early childhood educators had placed so much emphasis on children doing things for themselves that we had made the teacher invisible. As a result, we strictly prohibited American teachers from interfering with a child's art work, but didn't seem the least concerned about their thinking or speaking for children.

During and after my time with Reggio educators, I felt extremely different emotions. I was depressed by the fact that so few children in the world experience this type of excellent program and I felt that I needed to rewrite everything I had ever written. I also felt thoroughly energized and inspired to continue working no matter what that involved. I came to the realization that NAEYC's work to date hadn't been completely wrong, it just hadn't gone far enough. Our thinking was constrained by our experience and reflected relatively accurately our own socio-political context.

Collaborating to Revise Developmentally Appropriate Practice: The Influence of Reggio Emilia

One of the most important lessons I learned in Reggio Emilia was the value of collaboration. I realized that my mistake had been trying to revise developmentally appropriate practice alone or with the input of mostly like-minded people. I returned from Reggio and asked the NAEYC Governing Board to appoint an eight-person panel to oversee the revision process. The panel included Becky New, one of our severest critics, as well as representatives of other critical perspectives - Barbara Bowman, Carol Brunson Day, Victoria Fu, Lilian Katz, Teresa Rosegrant and Deborah Ziegler. The panel worked for almost three years, reviewing written critiques and research, and holding open hearings at meetings, but mostly locking ourselves in a room for days at a time arguing over fundamental premises of our profession and its knowledge base.

We went into this collaborative process without preconceived ideas of the outcome. In fact, at the first meeting, we discussed such basic issues as whether the book had outlived its usefulness and whether to cease using the phrase, developmentally appropriate practice. Everything was open to debate. In the end, we did more rewriting than revising. At Becky New's urging, we agreed that much of our position comes from values about what kind of children we want and what we consider to be the "good life" for children. These values, implicit in the 1987 version, are clearly stated at the outset of the 1997 edition.

Not only was the process of revising DAP influenced by Reggio Emilia, but the content of the 1997 edition also includes specific changes based on new knowledge gained from our encounters with Reggio. Reggio Emilia moved DAP in three substantial ways: 1) emphasis on the social construction of knowledge and the role of representation in learning; 2) articulation of the teacher's role as co-constructor with children and documenter of the learning process; and 3) explication of the integral role of parents in the life of the school.

It is important to point out that most of these changes came from sources in addition to Reggio. For example, relationships with families are given much more emphasis in the 1997 edition. Many groups in the U.S., including the National Association of Bilingual Education and the National Black Child Development

Institute, requested this change. But Reggio's practice with regard to families is so exemplary that it served as an inspiration for articulating the standard.

The 1997 edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* articulates principles of child development and learning that underlie the suggested practices and guide teacher decision-making. The Reggio Emilia approach influenced, at least to some extent, the inclusion of four of the twelve principles:

#6. Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts (p. 12).

#7. Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them (p. 13).

#10. Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery (p. 14).

#11. Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know (p. 15).

Principle #11, the role of representation in learning, is the principle that comes most directly from the Reggio Emilia approach - the concept that, in representing their understanding, children's understanding is changed. For example, in teaching about developmentally appropriate practice, we usually require students to read a book, watch a video, hear a talk, and/or visit a program. These "presentations" provide some knowledge, but true understanding of developmentally appropriate practice requires the student to talk about it, write about it, depict it, do it, debate it, reflect on it, revise their description - that is, represent DAP in many ways. My belief is that if Reggio Emilia schools were to cease to exist tomorrow, their lasting contribution to the early childhood knowledge base would be the principle of representation in learning.

The 1997 edition of *DAP* also includes guidelines for practice that address five dimensions of the teacher's role. Reggio affected all the guidelines, but particularly these:

1. Creating a caring community of learners (p. 16). The concept of classrooms as caring communities came from many sources but the particular emphasis on children learning from other children is attributable to the Reggio approach.

2. Teaching to enhance learning and development (p. 19). Reggio's influence can be seen in these statements: "Teachers promote children's productive collaboration . . ." and "To enhance children's conceptual understanding, teachers use various strategies that encourage children to reflect on and 'revisit' their learning experiences." The last statement is not new, having been part of the High/Scope curriculum for decades, but it is also an integral part of the Reggio approach.

3. Assessing children's learning and development (p. 21). I have no doubt that the following guideline would not be in the 1997 edition without Reggio's influence: "Assessment legitimately addresses not only what children can do independently but what they can do with assistance from other children or adults. Teachers study children as individuals as well as in relationship to groups by documenting group projects and other collaborative work." Assessing children through group work is rare in American contexts in which we value individual achievement above all else. American parents want to know about their child's work, so this guideline moves assessment practice in a new direction.

4. Establishing reciprocal relationships with families (p. 22). The importance of families in early childhood education is hardly new, but the key word in the revision is reciprocal. Reciprocity is not possible without shared power and respect. This type of relationship with families is more complicated and more difficult to implement than either the outdated parent education model or the current concept of parent choice. However, the diversity among North American children and families presents unique challenges for educators interested in developing reciprocal relationships with families.

Embracing the Paradox: An Essential Skill for Collaboration

All the specific principles and guidelines listed here and others that could be cited constitute valuable learning from our collaborative encounters with colleagues in Reggio, Northern America and other countries. But the most valuable insight I gained from my experience in Reggio and, particularly, from listening to Loris Malaguzzi was the freeing power of embrac-

ing paradox. A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement that may, in fact, be true. Embracing paradox is a very Italian way of thinking, one that delighted Malaguzzi. For instance, his schools had a professional puppeteer whose work continually demonstrated the paradox of reality and fantasy - puppets are real and, yet, they are not real. In reflecting on the concept of paradox, I considered that its appeal is very cultural. Americans are far more concrete in their thinking; we tend to see issues in either/or, point/counterpoint terms. We have a two-party system; our controversies are usually reduced to two positions such as anti-abortion or pro-choice. I realized that the success of the 1987 edition of *DAP* may have been attributable to its clear contrast of appropriate and inappropriate practices - it appealed to and reflected American cultural values and ways of thinking.

To move beyond, we needed a new paradigm. We needed to challenge the field to move from either/or to both/and thinking. This is a key construct in the 1997 *DAP* (p. 23). For example, children need to be safe and they need to take risks. They need predictability and flexibility. To choose one of these seeming contradictions is to do a disservice to children.

Once I intellectually understood the power of embracing paradox, I was able to behaviorally adapt the concept in collaborative work. I do so by "enlarging the frame." First, I try hard to know myself and my own preferences, cultural perspectives and biases. When I encounter someone's position or a situation with which I disagree, I think of it as existing within the confines of a picture frame. In my mind, I literally expand the sides of the frame to get more information, to listen to the position or observe more of the context. In doing so, I almost inevitably find that there is potential for agreement or, at least, the possibility for beginning negotiation. After several decades of more or less successful collaborative work, I've discovered that Malaguzzi's tutorial on paradox was the most liberating and instructive lesson in collaboration skills that I could ever receive.

Defining Developmentally Appropriate Practice: A Collaborative Outcome

Perhaps the most important outcome of revisiting developmentally appropriate practice was to expand the definition. In 1987, we viewed the construct rather narrowly as having two dimensions: age-appropriateness and individual appropriateness. In 1997, we significantly expanded the construct, again influenced a great deal by Reggio Emilia. We now define developmentally appropriate practice as a teacher-decision making process that draws on at least three sources of information: what is known about child development and learning; what is known about individual children; and what is known about the social and cultural context. Each of these sources of information is dynamic. My conclusion is that based on this definition, Reggio Emilia schools are such good exemplars of early childhood education because they are so developmentally appropriate.

Collaboration for Improving Professional Development in North America

Returning to my thoughts about collaboration that began this article, I conclude with the challenge to North American educators to embrace the paradox of collaboration - it is often a painful process with a positive result. At times, the more painful the process, the more valuable the outcome because then we can trust that all voices have truly been heard and respected. Listening to people who disagree vehemently with you or who challenge your right to make decisions that affect them or their children is often uncomfortable. But preparing new generations of teachers to serve children and families whose needs and values we may not share is essential. It is of no use to provide teachers with a static education. We must teach them dynamic processes such as collaboration, negotiation and, yes, decision-making that is informed and re-informed by the ever-expanding knowledge base of child development and learning.

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TREES DOTTING THE LANDSCAPE: Issues in Collaboration from a Canadian Perspective

By Pat Tarr and Susan Fraser

Pat Tarr is an associate professor of education at the University of Calgary in Calgary, Alberta and participated in study tours to Reggio Emilia in 1997 and 2001. Susan Fraser is an early childhood education lecturer and consultant, formerly an instructor at Douglas College in Vancouver, British Columbia and visited the Reggio Emilia municipal early childhood program with the 1993 Canadian delegation.

When I began reflecting on the topic of collaboration and its meaning in a Canadian context, I searched for Canadian images that might be meaningful to our American neighbors. Canada is a country where the bulk of the population resides along a corridor within two hundred miles of the U.S. border. I thought about the images of railroad stations spread along the southern boundary of our country that were crucial in the settlement of this land. These stations are separated by hours of travel through mountains, across the prairies and forests to the more heavily populated area of southern Ontario with its proximity to Detroit and Buffalo, New York, to where Quebec borders on Vermont and Maine. Still the country continues eastward to the Maritime Provinces and the Atlantic Ocean. This is a country where I can fly from Calgary to London, England cheaper than I can fly to Halifax or St. John's, Newfoundland. This is a country where regional identities are strong and early childhood education is a provincial responsibility.

Since part of our Canadian identity is connected to living in a land of forests and vast open spaces, I began to reflect on the ecological balance that educators in Reggio Emilia have achieved with each part interconnected, like a healthy forest where all elements support the natural balance, from micro-organisms to birds, insects, wild flowers, ground covers and towering trees strongly rooted into the earth, history and culture of the community; a healthy forest where invading insects, drought or disease are seen as opportunities and challenges designed to strengthen not weaken the system. Balance is maintained by subtle and organizational structures designed to preserve and protect while supporting growth, change and adaptation necessary for an ecologically healthy environment.

In contrast, in our Reggio inquiry, we Canadians are newly sprouted trees, each locally adapted as single seedlings or small groves, sending out roots, still shallow, fragile and isolated but taking hold. What do we need to develop a strong ecological balance? What structures do we have to create a healthy forest of ideas and interdependent relationships that will support our growth and viability?

As I contemplated issues around collaboration, I realized how little I know about how the Reggio approach is currently impacting Canadian early childhood education. I felt that to reflect a Canadian perspective, this piece must be collaborative in nature. I contacted Sue Fraser for her perspective from the West Coast and travels across the country. I e-mailed other Canadian educators for information and insights about what supports us in our inquiry and dialogue with Reggio, and to identify our issues around working collaboratively. As I gathered responses to my queries, I became even more aware of how little we know about the work individuals or institutions are doing across the country. I questioned why it seems to be easier to know what is happening in Virginia, Boulder or St. Louis, than in Saskatchewan, Halifax or Toronto? It is even difficult to answer the question as to whether there are any preschools or child care centers in Calgary influenced by Reggio because of the structural divisions that exist between child care, preschool, and early childhood education that occurs in kindergarten and primary classrooms in elementary schools. Through the Reggio listserv, we hear voices from around the world but are often unaware of which of those voices are Canadian unless the e-mail address or the writer identifies himself or herself as such. North-south connections are made along the larger metropolitan corridors on the West Coast and

in Ontario/Quebec, but for those of us in the prairies and other smaller or more northern communities, we have fewer opportunities to travel to other centers or connect with others across the border. While Canadians have attended NAEYC conferences; Reggio Children Summer Institutes; workshops and study tours in Chicago, St. Louis, and Detroit; and study tours to Reggio Emilia, the rate of exchange for the Canadian dollar and limited funding for travel or professional development severely limits these opportunities for most early childhood educators.

Yet I do not want to focus on our distance, regionalism and structural divisions in the field of early childhood education but to celebrate our journey of inquiry into some common ideals. This inquiry may help bring us together in new ways and open up collaborative possibilities. I will use the term inquiry as I discuss how Canadian educators have explored, dialogued and been influenced by the Reggio approach because for each of us, it is research into our own pedagogy undertaken in diverse settings, from university teacher preparation programs and graduate courses, college programs, child care centers, preschools, kindergartens and elementary school classrooms.

Collaboration must first begin with a dialogue to find the basis for beginning the discussion and exploration. A few individuals began their dialogue and journey of inquiry in the late 1980s or early 1990s, and what might be called our first national collaboration occurred when a Canadian delegation visited Reggio Emilia in May 1993. One year later, four institutions in the Vancouver area hosted "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit. Across the country in Ontario, Alex Doherty and the Loyalist College Child Care Centre, began about eight years ago their inquiry into Reggio ideas and the relevance these might have for their practice. They have been one of the leading forces in that part of the country, offering workshops and conferences for the past five or six years, and are currently networking with centers across Ontario and Quebec. In Quebec, Carol Jonas, a member of the 1993 delegation, worked hard to bring "The Hundred Languages" exhibit to Montreal, as did Mabel Higgins of Lambton College to bring it to the Sarnia, Ontario area. Both these venues were cancelled when the original North American version of the exhibit was deemed too fragile to continue the intense travel schedule it had been on since its arrival in 1987. Although the rich potential for dialogue and provocation offered by the exhibit was lost, interest in Reggio continued in these areas through workshops and study tours in the United States. Loyalist College is interested in hosting the exhibit in the future, a possibility that could provide an important catalyst for inquiry.

In Western Canada, events furthering Reggio inquiry occurred with a workshop in Whistler, British Columbia that featured Lella Gandini and Louise Cadwell, sponsored by Capilano College. The arrival of "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit in Calgary in 1997, with two related conferences, one featuring Lella Gandini and the other with Baji Rankin, George Forman, and Lynn White in dialogue with local educators, created interest in Reggio that has continued to grow. In 1998, NAEYC's annual conference in Toronto drew Canadians from across the country and provided an opportunity for them to connect with Reggio-inspired educators from across the U.S. and Canada, providing a significant national connection.

Canadian publications have furthered the dialogue. In 2000, Sue Fraser's book, *Authentic Childhood: Reggio Emilia in the Classroom*, was published and provided a window into the journeys of Canadian educators in preschool, child care and community college. *Canadian Children*, published by the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC), which is the one national organization that serves early childhood educators, and *Early Childhood Education*, published by the Early Childhood Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association for teachers in kindergarten through third grade, have helped to maintain the dialogue by consistently publishing peer-reviewed articles about Reggio-inspired practice.

CAYC conferences have featured Reggio related sessions, as has the Early Childhood Education Council of British Columbia. For three years, Red Deer College in Alberta has offered week-long summer workshops, instructed by Lynn White from Winnetka, Illinois and Dave Kelly from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Child Care Association hosted a Reggio Summer Institute in 1999, taught by Carol Anne Wien, Janet Jamieson and Suzanne Narozniak.

Evidence of Reggio-inspired practice can now be seen in university teacher preparation programs and graduate courses, in college programs and/or in laboratory schools/child care centers at Capilano College, Douglas

College, North Island College in British Columbia; at Mohawk College, Algonquin College, Lambton College, Loyalist College and Waterloo in Ontario; and at Peter Green Hall Child Care Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia as well as in private/non-profit preschools. Carol Anne Wien and I have been working with kindergarten and elementary school teachers in our respective areas of Toronto and Calgary. There are active networking groups in Vancouver, Calgary and a newly organized group in the Montreal area. These lists are not complete but suggest the range of interest in Reggio inquiry that has developed in the last ten years.

I have focused on dialogue and inquiry into the Reggio Emilia approach as the basis for beginning to work collaboratively. In many respects, we are the isolated trees and not interdependent trees forming an ecosystem. There are hindrances to becoming collaborative that partly exist due to the organizational structures in which we work. For example, in Calgary, I have observed that there are elementary school administrators who are very interested in the Reggio approach and would like to build a teaching staff with a similar philosophy. However, hiring only one teacher with the anticipation that this individual can open up dialogue, in fact, has the opposite effect and serves to isolate a teacher whose practice may look different from other teachers on staff. In schools where staff members have little interest or experience with collaboration, a single teacher can be silenced rather than act as a healthy provocateur of dialogue about practice or a catalyst for collaborative work. Teachers must then look for a sympathetic colleague or reach outside their school to find support. When teachers work in teams, they often have no choice in their teaching partner. While this provides opportunities for pushing each other's thinking, Canadians, who do not have a culture of debate, retreat into being congenial rather than confront philosophical differences. Difference can be seen as a personal attack rather than opportunity for professional growth and it is difficult to create an environment in which teachers can feel safe to take risks and open themselves up for provocative discussions. Mabel Higgins suggests that even our use of the term "eh?" at the end of sentences implies our agreeable nature, but she also suggests that we are listeners and open to others' opinions, which provides opportunities for dialogue.

Gretchen Reynolds at Algonquin College cites a number of obstacles in becoming collaborative related to low funding of child care programs so that there is little money available for professional development and tools such as cameras for documentation, or time for staff to meet together. Additionally, high turnover of staff, due to low pay in many centers across the country, prevents the development of relationships and collaboration among teachers, and with parents and the community. She also mentioned lack of a consistent philosophical grounding across institutions, which in her area means that students studying Reggio at her college cannot transfer to their local university and follow this line of investigation.

In thinking about the issues surrounding collaboration, Susan Fraser interviewed college instructors and preschool/child care teachers and wrote the following synthesis of her brief survey:

I interviewed four teachers in a child care centre and two instructors teaching early childhood education in two different community colleges. All the people interviewed have been exploring the Reggio Emilia approach in their work for a number of years. I asked them how important they felt collaboration was in early childhood education. They all agreed that collaboration is absolutely essential, but find it is hard to achieve in practice. Margaret MacDonald at Douglas College said, "Collaboration is so pervasive, we begin with it and it goes on at all levels throughout the program. In the field, the students work in teams and they also have to collaborate with parents and, through negotiated curriculum, with the children. Our greatest challenge is to be able to reinforce collaboration when the students may not see it modeled in the field."

I asked the instructors how they build collaboration into the courses they teach. Margaret told us, "Collaboration is embedded in our curriculum." They help the students develop strategies for working in a group. She said, "We encourage students to identify their own learning style and the strengths they bring to group work. Some of them, for instance, may see themselves as resource people, others may identify their interpersonal skills. We then have them develop a working contract to set a professional tone and positive atmosphere. The contracts are designed so the students collectively understand the shared expectations, for instance, the importance of punctuality and commitment, and we expect them to give some thought to what would happen if difficulties arise." Darlene O'Krainetz, at Capilano College, added that

they send students out in pairs to do their practicums to make the experience more collaborative. She also noted that students are encouraged to plan and make decisions as a group and that the whole process of documentation demands a high level of collaboration.

When asked if they could identify anything that might prevent collaboration, Margaret said, "My experience is that the personality of the student who enters an ECE program tends to be social and collaborative. I think the idea of shared responsibility is appealing to them. They only resist group work when the process breaks down or when a group grade is assigned that they feel is lower than they would have received independently." Darlene felt that the use of themes in planning prevented collaboration. She said, "You don't need to collaborate with themes . . . if you don't have emergent curriculum, you can go home and do your thinking on your own." She also noted that when there is no hierarchy (as is the case in Reggio Emilia) and teachers see themselves as equals, there is much greater need for teachers to collaborate. Shift work and sharing space with other programs make collaboration difficult to achieve. Margaret was concerned that some centres inspired by Reggio Emilia eliminate all transitions and schedules, "Then some people don't know what to do because they don't have collaboration built into their programs yet." Both Margaret and Darlene noted that the grading of the student's group work is a major obstacle for collaboration. It is interesting to note that in the final analysis, ECE students are still unable to completely surrender their individualism and perceive, as they do in Reggio Emilia, that the group is more important than the individual.

Early childhood education practice, however, appears to be changing as more people in the field are exposed to the Reggio Emilia approach. This can be seen from the Quadra Island teacher's responses to the interview questions. They all agreed that collaboration is fundamental to the Reggio Emilia approach and they identified some of the factors that make it possible for them to work successfully as a team. Susan Emery said, "The most essential thing in our work is that we trust each other and we avoid being judgmental." Lise Burnett agreed, "Authenticity is vital, to be real, to enrich the situation as opposed to being negative . . . we are totally committed to honesty with each other." She went on to say, "I feel willing to risk more because it is safe in this group to risk." Sherrie Fudikuf said, "Making mistakes is really important because we learn from them. They give us a unique and specific opportunity for growth." We asked them to tell us about how they plan since they abandoned themes and began to negotiate the curriculum with the children. Barbara Lee said, "If someone has a strong idea about what the children may be interested in pursuing, we are willing to let them try it and we support them. Later we may ask if this is going anywhere but we have learned that unless there has been collaboration, it is only one person's vision and other members of the team may lack enthusiasm." Lise said, "Then we are not on board and don't feel the flame burning." Susan noted that "having no communication is the problem because when we do discuss it, it usually comes together." Sherrie ended the discussion by saying, "We have learned not to take it personally if someone changes your idea. One cannot work alone in this field because one needs a safety net. There is always something to be gained from every experience." From this exchange, one can see the importance of collaboration between teachers for the team to function well.

Finally, I asked the instructors what forms of collaboration would support their work with the Reggio approach. Darlene listed some practical suggestions such as using e-mail and voice mail to communicate with each other. At her preschool, they have clipboards around the room. They date the sheets and everyone adds information. At the end, she says, they have a collection of all the thoughts of the teachers involved. Margaret replied, "The form of collaboration that supports our work with the Reggio approach is that of group planning and collaborative documentation . . . our expectation of the students is that they use their observations and photographs of the children as a base from which to collaboratively document the learning process and to plan for future sessions. This collaborative challenge can be daunting but very fruitful because it obligates the students to work together to arrive at some consensus about the next activities that they plan for this particular group of children, and to rationalize their decisions based on the children's needs and interests." In-depth documentation shows how essential it is for teachers to collaborate with each other. Teachers soon discover that they cannot create the panels on their own because "everyone has seen something different happening and everyone has a different perspective about what the children are learning." It is through the collaboration necessary for doing high-quality documentation that teachers learn to function most effectively as a team.

Sue Fraser also describes the new child care centre at North Island Community College, Campbell River, British Columbia:

This child care centre would not have been possible without the extensive collaboration that was carried out over a period of two years between the local community, the college, the Association for Community Living (who were requested to administer the centre) and Tom Dishlevoy, the architect. Principles such as collaboration, transparency and aesthetics were core considerations in the planning process from the beginning when Judi Desprez, the designated director of the future child care centre, introduced the architect to the Reggio Emilia approach. When Tom saw the environments that the educators in Reggio Emilia had created for children, he was determined to design a child care centre that incorporated the basic tenets of the Reggio Emilia approach, and also reflected the local community and culture on the west coast of Canada. To do this successfully, he worked very closely throughout the process with early childhood educators, college administrators and members of the community. In this way, children's development, and the principles of design and aesthetics learned from Reggio Emilia were always at the core of the planning process. At a critical time in the process, the provincial government changed from one that had been very supportive and, in fact, had provided one million dollars to build the centre, to a government that had very different priorities. Members of the planning group, remembering the importance of advocacy, won the support of the local Chamber of Commerce by explaining to them how important quality child care was for the community and the contribution of ideas from Reggio Emilia. It was the strong support that the project received from different sectors in the local community that probably was a major factor in convincing the new government to continue providing funding for the project.

It is apparent from these interviews that teachers, college instructors and a community have found ways to become collaborative within their specific contexts. Our common inquiry has the potential to unite the field of early childhood education in new ways. What is lacking are structures that support the development of collaborative relationships within specific institutions at the micro level, at child care centers and in school board hiring policies that support the development of a school philosophy; or within macro structures that support inquiry and collaboration on a broader scale, within and across provincial boundaries, across organizations and across the country.

The Canadian Association for Young Children is very small and does not have the same power and voice that NAEYC has in the United States. Local grassroots networks are crucial but remain isolated within a specific community. We need to find ways to extend these networks across the country. E-mail and web sites are possible forms of connection. *Innovations* has provided a vision of what is happening throughout the United States and has been a crucial source of information for conferences, publications and contacts. Perhaps it is time to seek funding to support our inquiry through networks and cross-country communication. In February, a second delegation of Canadians will visit Reggio Emilia. This delegation will be composed of over 60 Canadians from across the country and will provide an opportunity to experience the Reggio schools together and a unique opportunity for us to talk to each other. This may encourage the germination of the seed of possibility.

NOTE: I want to thank Sue Fraser for her time spent interviewing and collaborating on this article, and also those who participated in these interviews. I give thanks to Mabel Higgins who provided editorial assistance and helpful comments. I also want to thank those individuals who responded to my e-mails: Alex Doherty, Gretchen Reynolds, Mabel Higgins, Carol Jonas and Carol Anne Wien, and regret that their work and contributions could not have a larger profile. I apologize to the many individuals who could not be contacted due to time constraints and who did not have an opportunity to add their voice to this.

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lellagandini@compuserve.com
(**temporary address for five years, beginning on August 20, 1998**)

"THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN" EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

February 2 - December 31, 2002
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Learning Materials Workshop
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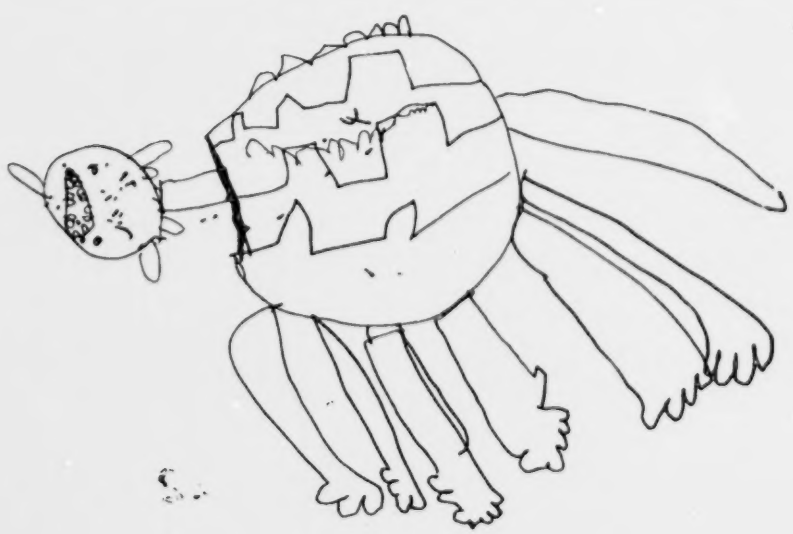
web site:
www.learningmaterialswork.com/shop/reggio.html

REGGIO EMILIA STUDY TOUR INFORMATION

Angela Ferrario works with the offices of Reggio Children to organize study tours of the Reggio Emilia Municpal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools. The 2002 spring study tour on May 25-June 1, 2002 has reached full capacity.

For information, contact:
Angela Ferrario
(202) 337-9191, e-mail: aferrario@worldbank.org



CONFERENCE CALENDAR *see www.mpi.wayne.edu for regularly updated conference calendar*

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education. We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621, e-mail: ***reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it***

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations *to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.*

The Innovative Teacher Project Roundtables
February 23, 2002: *Image of the Child and the Role of the Teacher*
The Children's School at Sonoma State University
Contact: Lia Thompson-Clark, (707) 664-2230

March 23, 2002: *Image of the Child and Parent Involvement*
Kumara School, Mill Valley
Contact: Betty Rappaport, (415) 388-5437

April 20, 2002: *Image of the Child and Documentation*
Nueva School, Hillsborough
Contact: Carolee Fucigna (650) 348-2272, ext. 339

May 5, 2002: *Image of the Child and Project Work*
Rosenberg Early Childhood Center, Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
Contact: Ronnie Jacobs, (415) 292-1282

June 8, 2002: *Revisit the Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach in the Context of your School*
Joyce M. Huggins Early Education Center, California State University, Fresno
Contact: Shareen Abramson, (559) 278-0226

For general information, contact:
Susan Lyon, Director, The Innovative Teacher Project
(415) 397-8211,
e-mail: titp@pacbell.net

The Program for Collaborative Learning • Carnegie Mellon Cyert Center for Early Education • Pittsburgh, PA

Saturday Seminar Series 2001-2002
March 16, 2002: *"The Educator as Learner: Enhancing Curriculum and the Classroom Environment,"*
Sonya Shoptaugh & Cyert Center educators

May 18, 2002: *"The Educator as Learner: Communicating our Learning through Documentation,"*
Sonya Shoptaugh & Cyert Center educators

Visitation Day at the Cyert Center:
April 12, 2002

Contact: Judy Abrams (412) 268-5470, e-mail: jabrams@andrew.cmu.edu, web site: www.cmu.edu/cyert-center

2001-2002 Ohio Statewide Seminars
March 16, 2002: Jeanne Goldhaber
"Teacher Inquiry and Collaboration: The Essential Role of Documentation" • Paul H. Jones Child Development Center, Kent State University • Kent, OH

May 4, 2002: Mary Jane Moran
"Linking Art, Literacy and Project Work to Create Meaningful Learning Contexts for Young Children" • Lakota Early Childhood Center • Cincinnati, OH

Contact: Connie Vale, Early Childhood Education
449-B E. State St., Athens, OH
e-mail:connie.vale@ode.state.oh.us

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators • Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University • Detroit, MI

May 4, 2002: Brenda Fyfe
"The Relationship Between Documentation and Assessment"

Contact: Judith Allen Kaminsky (313) 872-1790, e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu, web site: www.mpi.wayne.edu

Chicago Commons Child Develoment Program • Chicago, IL.

Materials Workshop:
March 6, 2001: Wire

May 2 & 3, 2002: *"Reggio Emilia Explorations: Learning Tour, Presentations and Discussion on Learning Environments"*

Contact: Juana Reyes, Professional Development Coordinator (773) 638-5700, e-mail: reyesj@chicagocommons.org

Teachers as Protagonists • Make a Mess and Make Believe School • Boulder, CO • June 13-15, 2002 • Presenters include: Amelia Gambetti, Carlina Rinaldi, George Forman, Lori Geismar-Ryan and the faculty of Make a Mess and Make Believe School
Contact: Ellen Hall (303) 443-8909, e-mail: ehall820@aol.com

CONFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST

Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Appproach • Robert Allerton Conference Center • Monticello, IL • August 11-15, 2002 • Instructors: Lilian Katz & Sylvia Chard
Contact:
(877) 455-2687 (toll-free), fax (217) 333-9561, e-mail: engaging@mail.conted.uiuc.edu

24

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, contact these organizations:

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
2460 16th St. NW,
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University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr., Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386,
fax (217) 333-3767
e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu (Bernard Cesarone)
web site: http://ericeece.org/
Reggio Emilia section - http://ericeece.org/reggio.html

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NEW RESOURCES

Gambetti, Amelia, "Making Choices for Learning through Relationships and Interactions," *Child Care Information Exchange,* 141, September/October 2001.

Gray, Heather, "Initiation into Documentation: A Fishing Trip with Toddlers," *Young Children,* 56(6), November 2001.

"Meet Karen Haigh, Director, Chicago Commons, Chicago, Illinois," *Child Care Information Exchange,* 142, November/December 2001.

Moran, Mary Jane & Jarvis, Jennifer, "Helping Young Children Develop Higher Order Thinking," *Young Children,* 56(5), September 2001.

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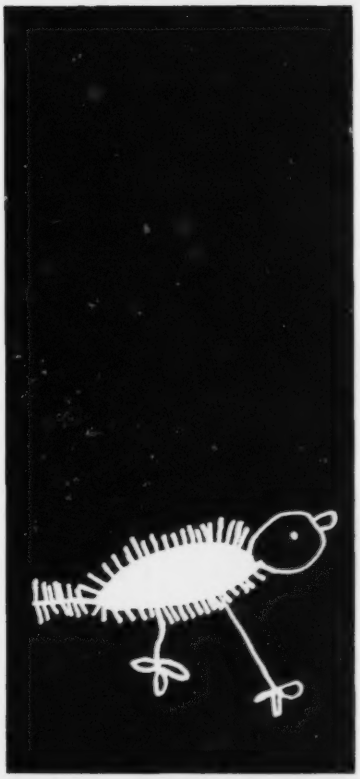

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The Evolution of THREE AMERICAN SCHOOLS in Dialogue with the Experience of the REGGIO EMILIA MUNICIPAL EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

PS 031133

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Make a Mess and Make Believe School's Story: Revisiting the Evolution of our Experience

L'Atelier: The Process of Understanding our Identity

The First Presbyterian Nursery School: Valuing the Process of Growth

Book Review of *Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care*

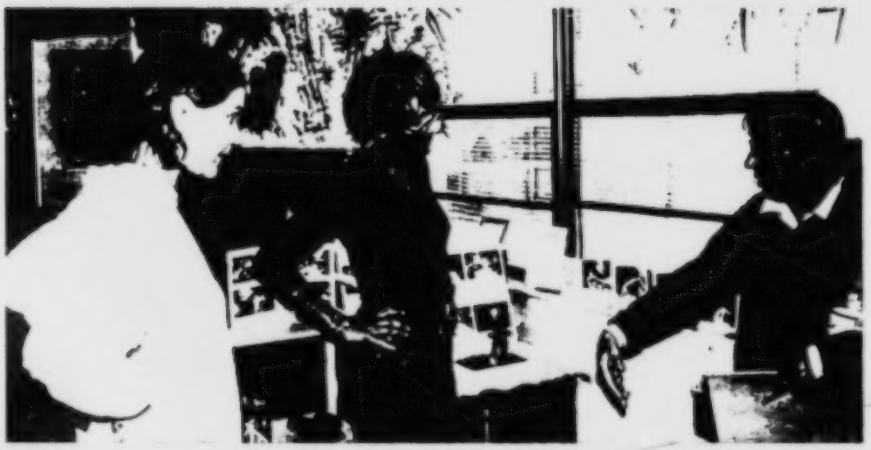
Reflections of Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Children Coordinator and Liaison for Consultancy in Schools

As a consultant to schools in the United States for the past 10 years, I have collaborated with teachers in the creation of many stories. As I reflect upon these three stories and the many others that are yet to be told, many thoughts about my actions as a consultant begin to emerge. I begin each experience that I encounter with actions of observation. When I am in a school, I walk around with my note pad and try to record everything, listening for the presence of children and adults, and their visibility in the environment. The notes that I write are essential for me because they document my perspective and reactions to the context and help me as I attempt to understand. As I organize my observations, I see myself making connections to my own experiences in Reggio Emilia and in other contexts I have visited, memories that include my professional and personal life because I believe that they are strongly interwoven. I like to think of the history of my work and the work of the schools in Reggio Emilia, including our values and the choices we have made, as a journey in the creation of my identity that can become an example, a reference point for other journeys.

In order to understand my reflections, I pose many questions to teachers to clarify what I have observed within the context of their school. When I ask questions, I am attempting to begin to make interpretations that are consistent with the intentions of the teachers, not to assess whether they are "right" or "wrong." Throughout this process, I am constantly thinking, adapting my thoughts to the situation where I find myself, always open to change and to modifying my interpretation, if necessary. As I begin to construct the story of the experience, giving

continued on next page

visibility to my perspective and that of the teachers, I can also offer the ways in which my own experiences may be used in the evolution of theirs. The encounter that we create together becomes a relationship of sharing, reciprocity, communication and collaboration.



As the conversation between the teachers and myself unfolds, I intend for my perspective to be a provocation for the teachers as they begin to consider their choices and intentions, so that they become more aware of their actions. I think I often create feelings of uncertainty among the teachers, encouraging them to take risks and to seek solutions that will fit within their own personal contexts, constructing objectives and goals together. Certainly, my intention is not to transform the school into a "Reggio" school, but rather to support the discovery and emergence of the school's individual identity.

Somewhere along a school's journey towards its renewal, the time comes to open the school to visitors. This opening becomes an opportunity to embrace additional perspectives, and to use these as a resource for new reflections and the construction of new knowledge about education. I believe that opening the school is like opening the mind because the encounters with others and their different points of view, and the way in which we become open to accept them are an important aspect of our professional development through collaboration.

Reflecting upon my personal experience as a consultant, it is important for me to acknowledge the sense of equilibrium that I strive to ensure through my work with others. I try to determine how I fit into the continuity of the school's evolution. It is important for me to understand and respect our individual stories, and the story we are creating and living together. It is essential that together we believe in the value of childhood and early childhood education. Ultimately,

I believe that opening the school is like opening the mind because the encounters with others and their different points of view, and the way in which we become open to accept them are an important aspect of our professional development through collaboration.

Amelia Gambetti

it is about our shared and common values. If we believe that our values determine our actions, we can find interesting similarities between our experiences because we have values in common.

From my work with these three schools and all of the others, I have observed a particular attitude that makes our work together possible . . . the evolution of a school. It is through our awareness and courage, combined with our dedication, that we decide to invest our energy and effort into an action of research and study, thus deepening our work. We may not always succeed in what we would like to accomplish but if we are invested in our work, we feel part of a process that stimulates our thinking. We feel that we are building a new story that will be part of a more complex history. Together, we can be hopeful, optimistic and positive about the future of children and childhood, and the future of a better society.

From the Three Schools: Our Stories-Our Connections

As three schools in the United States evolving in dialogue with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, we are most grateful for our strong and vital collaborative relationships with Amelia Gambetti. Amelia's presence in our schools, sharing her experiences as an educator in the schools in Reggio Emilia and as consultant to schools in the United States, and the creation of experiences together in our unique contexts, has inspired and supported us. Through Amelia's inspiration and support, we have begun to develop and give visibility to our unique identities. Encouraged by Amelia, we are seeking to define and examine our images and our values within the daily life of our schools, in an endeavor to understand the meaning of education and the meaning of our lives.

Our stories play an essential role in our effort to understand our own unique identities. We compose these stories in order to revisit and reflect on our past experiences, to connect with our current thinking, and to evoke our hopes and dreams for the future. These are journeys of meaning making . . . defining who we have been, who we are and who we might become. The invitation to combine our voices and our stories provides us with the opportunity to engage in an experience of professional development, through which we are seeking to understand ourselves and one another. We view professional development as the exchange of thoughts, ideas, questions and answers in continuous dialogue based on collegiality and reciprocity. Through this forum, we hope to inspire and provoke others interested in the Reggio Emilia approach to make further connections by reflecting on their own journeys within their own unique contexts. We encourage you to share your stories of evolution with one another and with us, thereby creating an anthology of our experiences.

The Make A Mess and Make Believe School's Story:
Revisiting the Evolution of our Experience

by Ellen Hall, Director and Sheri Hunt, Director/Teacher

The Make A Mess and Make Believe School in Boulder, Colorado welcomes 300 children, ages six weeks through six years and their families. The school's faculty includes 28 classroom teachers, a pedagogical team, an *atelierista*, a creative movement teacher, and support personnel composed of kitchen and administrative staff. The parent community at Make A Mess and Make Believe School values and invests in the education of their children. The educators have the opportunity to participate in an Intern/Master's Program developed in partnership with the University of Colorado at Denver.

The story of our experience begins with a small seed, the creation of a "Mommy and Me" class, an opportunity for children and their parents to come together to explore materials. It began in 1984 as a small playgroup of eight but, as time passed, this small seed of a program grew and flourished in response to the requests of families and children. The small seed became a tree - a large preschool - that invited the children and families of Boulder to attend.

To accommodate the growing interest of the community in our school, in early 1995, we constructed a 17,000 square foot building on an acre and a half of land - the tree had found a home. At this time, the school curriculum was theme-related and project-based. Teachers were expected to create lesson plans many months prior to actual experiences in the classroom. Blocks of time were devoted to "specials," when specialized teachers brought their own lesson plans in music, gym, science and Spanish. During this period of time, the children were certainly busy and having fun, but there was an inherent fragmentation of the encounters that were taking place. We were unaware of the continuity and connections that are critical in the process of constructing knowledge. In addition, our tree was lacking in roots. We were following the children only on the surface, neglecting the complexity of their investigations.

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However, our school had distinguished itself as a place where children's feelings and emotions were acknowledged and respected. Supportive social learning, the name of our philosophy, includes the belief that all children are naturally caring, want to enter into and maintain positive relationships with others, and have the potential to be successful socially. Supportive social learning, together with the influence of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, also led to an acknowledgement and respect for the child as a unique individual. The school was a place where we sought to build upon each child's strengths and interests. At this point in our evolution, we considered that our philosophical underpinnings represented a thoughtful image of children. From our perspective, we were caring for and supporting our tree.

Then in late 1995, we encountered Reggio ed cators with their image of children observed and acknowledged through an incredibly powerful lens. Our first experience with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education came during the NAEYC conference in Washington, D.C. We attended this conference with the goal of reconnecting with current ideas and theories in early childhood education. Filled with curiosity and wonder, we attended several sessions in the Reggio Emilia tracks, and found that the presentations challenged our image of children's potential for thinking and learning. We reflected on our philosophy of supportive social learning and the way it viewed children through a lens focused on the fullness of their hearts while blurring the richness of their minds. While the multiple intelligences theory encouraged us to look at the individual, we began to consider the child as an important contributor within the learning community.

We were so inspired by the schools in Reggio Emilia that we bought six copies of the book, *The Hundred Languages of Children*, edited by Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini and George Forman. We returned to Boulder with hopes of nourishing our tree in order to expand our understanding of children. Together we read, studied and discussed the book over the course of the year. We discovered that David Hawkins, author of "Remarks: Malaguzzi's Story, Other Stories" in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, was a professor at the University of Colorado and a new conversation began. Through our relationship and collaboration with David and his wife Frances, we were fortunate to be introduced to Lella Gandini, Reggio Children liaison in the U.S. for the dissemination of the Reggio Emilia approach, and George Forman, professor of education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Mentored by Lella and George, our professional development acquired new dimensions. We were encouraged to attend conferences hosted by schools inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, to visit "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit and, finally, to participate in a study tour of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. George and Lella supported us in our efforts to bring the exhibit to the Boulder community and host our first two conferences. As we worked, our tree continued to grow and began to establish a network of roots, a system of relationships with educators around the world inspired by the pedagogy of the educators from Reggio.

Our relationship with Lella led to our first meeting with Amelia Gambetti and a dialogue about hopes, dreams and possibilities for work together emerged. Amelia accepted our invitation to visit the school in the fall of 1999. She began her working relationship with us by listening, "walking the environment" in an effort to understand who we are, our culture and our context. Amelia was looking for the visibility of children and adults working together in the daily life of the school. What she found was the hand of the adult obscuring the hand of the child, manufactured toys stifling the exploration of natural materials, and the strong presence of color muting the depth of the children's work. The image of a curious, thoughtful and competent child was not visible in our school. Also invisible was a sense of community, connections among the children, teachers and families within the school, and connections with our context, the community of Boulder.

After listening, Amelia continued the conversation by sharing slides and stories of the schools in Reggio Emilia, stories of her experiences that could provide connections with our experience. We reflected together, exchanging thoughts, ideas, questions and answers in an effort to define the meaning of our work, inspired and influenced by a philosophy that celebrates the strength and potential of the child. Amelia never told us what to do nor were easy answers provided. Instead, she encouraged us to look within ourselves to find and to build answers, to begin to ask our own questions

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and to develop our values in an effort to become a school that seeks to understand the meaning of our work, of education and of our lives.

During the months that followed, our school community focused our energy and made a commitment to the "process of deconstruction." We had entered a time of uncertainty, in which we were questioning our philosophy as individuals and as a school. We felt that there was a depth of meaning to our work, to our understanding of the process of learning that we had not yet begun to realize. We needed to unravel the pedagogy that we had constructed in order to begin to rebuild. This was probably the most delicate piece of our journey because we were required, each of us, individually and together, to revisit and rethink some of our previous meanings and beliefs about early childhood education. We began to transform our environment, slowly and patiently building new meanings and values. Also, with children and families, we designed and planted a beautiful garden at our school, a reflection of the community in which we live, beginning to create connections between the school and Boulder.

Communication and collaboration continued with Amelia until her return to Boulder in the summer of 2000 for the Third Summer Institute in the United States organized by Reggio Children in partnership with the Make a Mess and Make Believe School. The institute was not held in our school. We simply were not ready. We had removed the strong presence of color that was muting the depth of the children's work, but the work of the children had not yet been revealed. The plastic toys that were stifling the exploration of natural materials had been removed, but we had not yet gathered a rich material supply. We had removed the hand of the adult that was obscuring the hand of the child, but the hand of the child was still not truly visible. We found ourselves at the beginning of the process of re-constructing an environment that supported the values we espoused. The tree had been pruned, but the new buds had not yet sprouted.

As we continued to co-construct our thoughts about our identity and how to make it visible, our learning and understanding began to take shape and form, reflected in the environment of the classrooms and the hallways that connected them. It became clear that as we began to understand ourselves, we were ready to begin sharing our environment and experience with others. With the encouragement and support of Amelia during her visit in the fall of 2000, we were challenged to share the evolution of our work with one another and with other educators from around the state. In the winter of 2001, we organized and participated in "A Day on Professional Development." This first opening of our school strengthened our sense of identity through the sharing of our classroom environments and the message we conveyed to everyone who entered the school. We found that the challenge of opening a school is more than unlocking doors - it's about listening to children, listening to your colleagues,

listening to yourself and, as a result, examining values and their presence in the daily life of the school. It is about self-reflection, acknowledging who you are and what you would like to become.

Once again, inspired by Amelia's invitation, we decided to weave our school into our annual summer conference by hosting the experience within the school. Having the school as the site for the conference became an integral thread for the participants as they began to weave their own connections. With the contribution of Reggio Children, we organized and welcomed 250 educators from 27 states into our "home." For the school community, this was a time of realization in our evolution because we acknowledged the importance of creating and maintaining a community of learners, an essential aspect of our identity. Speaking with other educators, sharing ideas and exchanging stories challenged our thinking and helped us to realize the potential of reciprocity and collegiality as a critical step on our continuing journey of co-construction. Andrea Sisbarro, a director/teacher at Make a Mess and Make Believe School, explains, "Having people visit our school, whether they are with an organized initiative or just passing through, is always a valuable experience for us because it gives us a chance to look at ourselves through their eyes. We learn more about ourselves from the questions they ask because it forces us to re-examine our way of doing things." We became aware that we were not only conveying an experience but we were creating a dialogue with other educators who, in turn, would become part of a shared conversation, revealing the power of communication and collaboration. The buds on the tree had begun to blossom.

As the understanding of our identity evolves through our collaboration with Amelia and the encounters with other educators inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, we are beginning to define and understand learning as a continuous process. The conversation has moved to a more personal level centered on our role as teachers and learners. In addition to asking who we are as a school community and making this visible, we now are beginning to engage in ongoing reflective practice in an effort to understand what we are doing and why. What we are discovering is a community of children and adults actively experiencing the daily moments in our school - observing, documenting, reflecting, analyzing, interpreting and making predictions about interactions and relationships. In this way, we have acknowledged our identity as a community of learners embedded within a community of practice, engaged in weaving theory and practice together. It seems fitting at this time for the focus of our upcoming summer conference to be teachers as protagonists of a community of learners. We will examine our images as professionals, researchers, philosophers and advocates for children with the support of Amelia and educators from St. Louis, Santa Monica, Miami and around the world. Through this endeavor, we will be opening both the doors of our school and the windows of our minds. The tree's network of roots is becoming more complex, deeper and increasingly intertwined.

We have begun to reflect on the process of learning in our school. Amelia's observation, documentation and organization encouraged us to listen and revisit, share and extend our work. She has supported our understanding of the ways in which these same processes of learning can be translated into our practice, our work with children and adults in the school. In addition, we have learned from Amelia the importance of beginning with our own context and building on the experiences that occur in the daily life of the school.

The Make a Mess and Make Believe School has begun to develop a strong sense of community through our collaboration with Amelia. Her presence has added a vital dimension in the creation of a shared experience that has transformed a sense of "I" into a sense of "we." Through our combined voice, we are sharing an experience making connections within the school, with the community of Boulder and with the educational community. Through the valuing of connections, we have begun to learn and understand about the connections between our work and our lives.

L'Atelier:
The Process of Understanding our Identity

by Simonetta Cittadini-Medina, Director

L'Atelier is located in Miami, Florida. The school welcomes 43 families and 57 children from eighteen months to five years old. The children are grouped by age. The "nido" (Spanish and Italian word meaning nest) includes children from eighteen months to three years old. The "3's" group welcomes children from three to four years old and the "4's & 5's" group includes children from four to five years old. L'Atelier's staff has ten members. Two teachers staff each classroom. A co-teacher works in the nido and one assistant supports the whole school. The director's assistant and the maintenance coordinator form the administrative and maintenance team.

The community of L'Atelier has a strong multicultural aspect. Twenty-two different nations of the world are represented at L'Atelier. This powerful presence of many different cultures, traditions and values is a continuous voice that causes us to reflect upon our identity, review our values and open our minds to listen to the other. Through the awareness of the community and its gifts, we are learning that the formation of our identity also depends on making who we are visible. The importance of creating this visibility supports our belief in a child that has a powerful thinking mind and can make choices . . . a strong child that has an opinion and a willingness to negotiate, listen and respect differences. This image of the child forms the core of our experience. It has helped the team of teachers see the child through a magnifying lens and enabled us to understand how children learn.

As long as I can remember, I have wanted to open an *atelier* for children, a workshop where children could engage in a free exploration of the world through art. I have lived in many different countries and the word *atelier* became an international concept to me. My husband Felipe Medina helped me to envision my dream and to realize that, in order to make it a reality, I needed to be willing to take risks. With Filipe's emotional and financial support, I embarked on the project of "L'Atelier Art Workshop for Children." Our diverse backgrounds, his in economics and engineering, mine in psychology and education, helped us to develop a well-balanced partnership in the creation of L'Atelier.

This art workshop was opened in downtown Miami. In a few months, a group of two and three year-old children was formed, and the classes were dedicated to the investigation of materials, research and self-expression. The constructivist theory of Jean Piaget and the social constructivist theory of Lev Vygotsky reinforced the pedagogy of the workshop. We underlined the importance of social interchanges as the basis of the co-construction of learning. During some research about children, psychology and art, I came across an article written by Lella Gandini. The article described the history of the Reggio Emilia approach to education. Imbedded within this article was the word *atelier,* which surprised and intrigued me immensely. The use of this word and the similarities with our pedagogy motivated me to travel to Italy, and encounter Reggio Emilia and the Reggio Emilia approach.

In September 1995, I met with Carla Rinaldi, Sergio Spaggiari and a teacher at the Diana School. As a result of this meeting, I felt compelled to re-think and re-evaluate my work. I wanted to initiate and sustain a dialogue that could help me to understand my own experience. A journey of investigation, research, learning and joy began. The strong provocation of this encounter accelerated the evolution of the art workshop. The number of children at L'Atelier was growing so we moved to a new location in South Miami. The art program continued and through my observations of the children, many questions arose: Why have an art program? What is "art?" What is the relationship

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Simonetta Cittadini-Medina

between art and intelligence? Is creativity related to intelligence? I realized that time was an issue and that art, as I perceived it, could not be taught.

Felipe and I envisioned the art workshop becoming a preschool. This new challenge was shared with the six families enrolled because their collaboration was essential for the development of our project. Parents and children greatly supported the evolution of our future preschool. I visited the Model Early Learning Center in Washington, D.C., and participated in the First Winter Institute in Reggio Emilia, Italy. I was overwhelmed by the strong provocations launched by the Reggio schools and by the presentations of the educators. The beauty, the aesthetics, the visibility of the children's work and their voices reinforced the message that the concept of education should and must be reformed. I returned to Miami, to the children, the parents and the small team of teachers with hope, joy, inspiration, wonder and questions.

Many changes began to take place. The most important change was in our perception of the school. Teachers joined the team that was once composed of only parents and myself. This new team of educators created a sense of "we" in our school. We began to have many meetings and discussions about the philosophy of the school and our personal beliefs about education. Many concerns and questions were considered, some were resolved and more questions arose. We realized that we could not create our school's philosophy without the children and their interactions, our observations, the parent's feedback and collaboration. We came to the conclusion that we could only start with a theoretical approach, and that time and experience would help us re-evaluate our thoughts and beliefs about education. From the beginning, we were aware that Miami, though a part of the United States, is also a Latin city and the influence from the Latin American cultures was very strong.

On November 22, 1997, we celebrated the inauguration of L'Atelier as a preschool. One hundred twenty people attended including our first families, their friends, the mayor of South Miami and the General Consul of Italy. It was a moment of great joy. With time, we realized that our biggest challenge was to find and establish a team of teachers willing to commit to working in a new school that is immersed in a research process and that does not have all the answers. Our journey of study and research took us to the Reggio Children Summer Institutes in the United States. We visited the "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit and engaged in discussion meetings at school.

In 1999, an unexpected event forced me to be absent from L'Atelier for six months. The school inevitably entered a crisis because of its fragile identity, the teachers' and parents' confusion about its leadership, and the fact that much of the sense of commitment and expectations were centered in myself, the director. This was a time of struggles, anxiety and fears, which brought changes, breakthroughs, hopes and a willingness to continue. Teachers and parents had to face the situation at the school and their own commitment as part of the family of L'Atelier. The fragmented identity of the school began to come together. The attitude of "never giving up" was born and resulted in a new sense of continuity, belonging, collegiality, partnership and responsibility among all participants of L'Atelier.

Amelia Gambetti visited L'Atelier for the first time in January 2001. For one and a half days, she walked the environment, trying to read and listen to the voices of the three protagonists of the school - children, parents and teachers. She looked for traces of identity, multiculturalism and a sense of place. She tried to find the traces underlying the teacher's work and the respect they give to themselves. She found that L'Atelier was trying to make a difference in our image of education. A lot of "doing" was visible at the school. But where was the visibility of our identity? Where was the presence of the families' cultural backgrounds in the school? She provoked us to think about our identity. She also helped us to focus on the rights of the three protagonists rather than their needs.

How did we evolve from a vision of needs to a vision of rights? First, we realized that evolution is an ongoing process. Our best tool was to make the process of children, parents, and teachers visible. We created a panel giving visibility to the actions we wanted to take. Teachers' meetings became professional development meetings and we changed our approach toward the daily analysis of our work. We tried to make the context of the school visible by giving identity to our city. We realized the importance of revealing the multiculturalism that lives in the school. We became aware of time - time to think together and time to think again. Amelia's visit was another immense breakthrough for the team of teachers. Even though our

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time together was brief, the gifts she left us have a strong echo in our hearts and minds. It was like a hurricane crossing our lives and space.

Amelia invited us to present our experience in Reggio Emilia during a study tour organized by Reggio Children, a continuation of the World Forum on Education in Athens, Greece in April 2001. This experience was an immense learning opportunity for us because we were immersed in the challenge of making visible the multiculturalism of our school. Amelia's second visit was eight months later. We organized one week of work, when Amelia would continue her observations in an effort to understand our identity. Since her last visit, the team had begun to establish a much deeper attitude of collaboration. Her provocations caused us to question how we were organizing ourselves to collaborate and what it meant to collaborate. She highlighted the need to analyze the school as a system of relationships and interactions. Amelia shared with us slides from the schools of Reggio Emilia where the potential of the materials and their languages were very alive and visible. This gift allowed us to start to make connections with our own experiences.

We organized our first conference in an attempt to reach out into the community. In order to help us become aware of our identity, Amelia proposed that we open the school for visitors after the conference. Her proposal was a shock to us. Were we ready? Would we be able to answer the questions asked by the participants? We found that we were. Their comments, reflections and questions became a mirror of our own experience and identity. We learned to listen to the different points of view of the participants and were able to enter in dialogue with them. We started to weave a quilt of knowledge. Our environment sent messages of identity, research, culture and pedagogy. Most importantly, sharing our school with other educators gave us a greater awareness of our own identity.

Amelia returned to our school four months later. The anticipation was great. Amelia had become a part of our school and her uniqueness is sensed throughout L'Atelier. Together we would prepare and revisit the mini stories that we wanted to share in our first round table, organized in order to continue our work with the community. The exercise of revisiting and looking at the slides together was a tremendous opportunity for professional development. The round table took place at L'Atelier and we opened the doors of our school a second time. Not only did we present our experiences, we also created a situation where exchange, discussion, dialogue and reflections were possible.

We realized that we were facing a new stage in our professional development. We have developed a stronger understanding of the style and the essence of our school and its culture. We have adopted the practice of going beyond our daily experiences. The issue of intentionality has become a focal point. We intend to take action regarding the language of materials, the balance between documentation and environment, and the attention to details in our school.

Working with Amelia has opened our eyes and made visible the power of sharing, communicating and collaborating. It is a strong tool in the re-evaluation of our own experience. By opening our school, we realized the construction of knowledge that takes place among all participants, among the team of teachers and the parents. Becoming aware of our identity and the work that we do is a process of evolution.

3

The First Presbyterian Nursery School:
Valuing the Process of Growth

by Mary Hartzell, Director

The First Presbyterian Nursery School of Santa Monica has served the children and families in the surrounding community for forty years. The school welcomes families from diverse religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and offers a morning program with an extended day to serve working families. The school's longstanding value of community, continuity of relationships and a developmental philosophy lead us to explore the work of the schools in Reggio Emilia. Over the past ten years, our explorations of the Reggio approach have continued to deepen our work with children, parents and colleagues.

A core community of teachers and staff that had worked together for many years provided a strong base for our explorations. The nursery school already supported social and emotional growth through open dialogue, and processing interactions between and among children and teachers. A value for the process of growth, and our ability and desire to work together for the children supported our struggles to change and integrate what we were learning from the work in Reggio Emilia into the daily life of our school.

An article in *Young Children* entitled, "Beautiful Spaces, Caring Places" captivated our interest and we began our investigations. We read articles and attended seminars at the NAEYC conference by Carlina Rinaldi, Lella Gandini and Amelia Gambetti, and started to make physical changes in our environment. Professional growth was already a strong value and we were excited enough to investigate further. Six teachers and the director attended the First Reggio Children Summer Institute in the U.S. in Columbus, Ohio in 1996. We were determined to learn more.

At that conference, we met Amelia Gambetti who began to consult with us several months later. Amelia's knowledge, deep understanding of the work and dynamic energy became a support and a provocation in the development of our work. We addressed the environment, the flow of the day, small group work, the value of documentation and the daily journal, all from the perspective of our changing image of the child and the rights of children, teachers and parents.

Challenging teachers to be open to change and to think like a researcher with an inquisitive mind that embraces the question rather than the answer is a special gift that Amelia brings to her work with teachers. Our continued relationship over the past six years has challenged us to think and to take risks. Amelia came to the school six times during these years, but the relationship and dialogue continued even when she wasn't present. Successful dialogues don't presume answers or outcome but are an exchange of thoughts and feelings, which allow for the possibility of change because one mind experiences another mind. Through our relationships, new connections are made and old mental models can shift as we open our minds to other points of view. As educators, we can continually revisit our ideas about what we believe to be good early childhood practice and take action to change the interactions with children, parents and teachers that do not give support to our newly constructed knowledge.

We made the choice to invest in our professional development. Teachers attended study tours, both here and in Italy, and we used every opportunity to learn from others who were inspired by the work in Reggio. "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit spent two years at Mills College in Oakland and that gave us an excellent opportunity for professional development through the many initiatives held in conjunction with the exhibit. The schools in St. Louis and Chicago Commons provided further encouragement and inspiration.

As we gained knowledge and confidence, we were able to strengthen our work with the parents. A group of twelve parents and four staff went on a field trip to see the exhibit in Oakland. This experience gave our parents new insight and excitement about the work of the school. They shared their enthusiasm by organizing educational opportunities for other parents. They

made a video of interviews with current and alumni parents about their experiences in the nursery school and their understanding of the Reggio approach. Our sense of community and focus was growing.

Amelia's visits continued to support our self-reflection, which provoked changes in our work as teachers. Things that were quite difficult for us to implement initially became easier with practice. The history of our journey in the learning process gave us confidence to meet new challenges. By looking at our early documentation, we could see how much we had grown. The children were more competent and capable than we had imagined and so were we. Little by little, we had evolved, meeting each challenge as it came and always looking at what we could change rather than what seemed unreachable. It is important to view the work of the schools in Reggio Emilia as an inspiration and a vision of possibility, not as a comparison or an excuse not to take action in our own context.

When Amelia visited the school in the fall of 2000, she asked us to consider opening the school to other educators. She felt that we had created a context that gave visibility and respect to the children, teachers and parents, which could give support to other educators on their journey. Perhaps even more importantly, we would continue our own professional development as we learned to articulate and share our work. We remembered how valuable it was for us when we visited St. Louis and related our experiences to an American context. We agreed and organized our first "Educators' Day" in January 2001 for 60 visitors. We had a full day of presentations by teachers and parents, and a visit to the classrooms. Our feelings before the visit were a mixture of excitement, anxiety and exhaustion. After the visit, we experienced a deep satisfaction and renewed commitment to continue deepening our own journey. Sharing our school and our work connects us with others in the larger community and gives more visibility to the rights of children to the highest quality education in these early years.

The NAEYC conference was in California in November 2001 and since several Italian educators would be in the United States, Amelia suggested that it would be an opportunity to organize a seminar at the school as a collaboration between Reggio Children and The First Presbyterian Nursery School. We organized a conference for 150 people, secure in the fact that Carlina, Lella and Amelia would be offering great support for the day through their presentations. The events of September 11th changed all that. Several weeks before the conference, we found out that it would not be possible for all the Italians to travel to the U.S. Our staff met and decided to go ahead with the conference. I assured them that it would be a much smaller attendance as soon as we notified the participants of the change in the program. To our surprise, only a few people cancelled and new people registered in their place.

The parents supported the day by organizing all the details of hospitality. They were so proud to have visiting educators come to "their school." Two parents presented their experiences as part of the program. Laurie Grotstein, one of the parents who presented at the October 31st Visitors' Day, shared these reflections on the experience of opening the school to visitors:

"I think the experience of having the school opened to visits from educators gives me - and all of the parents - the opportunity to reflect on what makes this particular school special, and what draws other teachers and administrators to it. What we hear consistently from visitors is real delight, and perhaps a sense of wonder, that the ideals of the Reggio approach are actually being implemented successfully here, and that the school is such a thriving, happy environment for everyone. I know parents take real pride in opening up the school to educators and others who can really appreciate what's happening here.

One aspect of our community that seems to elicit a strong response from visitors is the high level of parent participation in the daily life of the school. 'How do you get so many parents involved?' is a frequently asked question. Teachers from other schools seem to want to know how to generate at their own schools the kind of parent involvement that they see here. Without a doubt, parents become involved because they want to be connected to their children's first school experience in a meaningful way. I believe they remain involved because they discover connections to other parents. We have a real community and it works because it is basically democratic, not autocratic. We have traditions that we like to maintain but we also welcome change. I think educators can see the value placed on process here, not only with the children and teachers but also with the constantly evolving work of the parents: documentation boards, the

Successful dialogues don't presume answers or outcome but are an exchange of thoughts and feelings, which allow for the possibility of change because one mind experiences another mind.
- Mary Hartzell

parents' space, the garden, cooking projects, parent education, etc. Participation and enthusiasm are high because we feel we are all 'in it together,' that we all have a voice and that there is a common good. It's useful for those of us who are sojourning here with our children to reflect on this from time to time - and our visitors from the outside world help us do that."

Opening the school to visitors has enriched and deepened our work. The feedback from other educators validates the hard work we have done over the years and encourages us to continue our explorations. Teachers who challenge their own thinking give stronger support to children's thinking. To be a teacher is to be continually learning, questioning and researching. We put ourselves on the line, so to speak, when we share our work with others. Our work is no longer invisible but available in words and images for others to see, question and reflect upon with us. As teachers, we have to drop our defenses and take responsibility for what we do each day that either strengthens or weakens a strong image of the child.

A great deal of thought, reflection and collaboration went into the teacher presentations. So much new learning came about when we opened the school to visitors. A teacher, Flor Ferro, shares the experience of presenting her work to other educators in the following reflections:

"Preparing to open our classroom to the public is definitely a challenge for me. I see it as a question of my ability as a teacher, especially in the area of documentation. I want visitors to experience the everyday life in my classroom through the documentation.

For me, presenting experiences falls into two categories - presenting work that is complete and presenting work in progress. The sense of accomplishment over a completed project, interest or activity is, hopefully, something to be proud of, something to be savored and enjoyed. Then another sense emerges, one that recognizes the shortcomings of what was accomplished. This can be demoralizing or motivational - and is often both. A part of me recognizes all that was accomplished, and another sees the gap between what is and what could have been.

Presenting a work in progress is a different experience. There are no regrets like there are with a work that is completed. Suggestions and ideas, wherever they come from, can be implemented. It feels both exciting and risky to present a work in progress because we don't know where it's going."

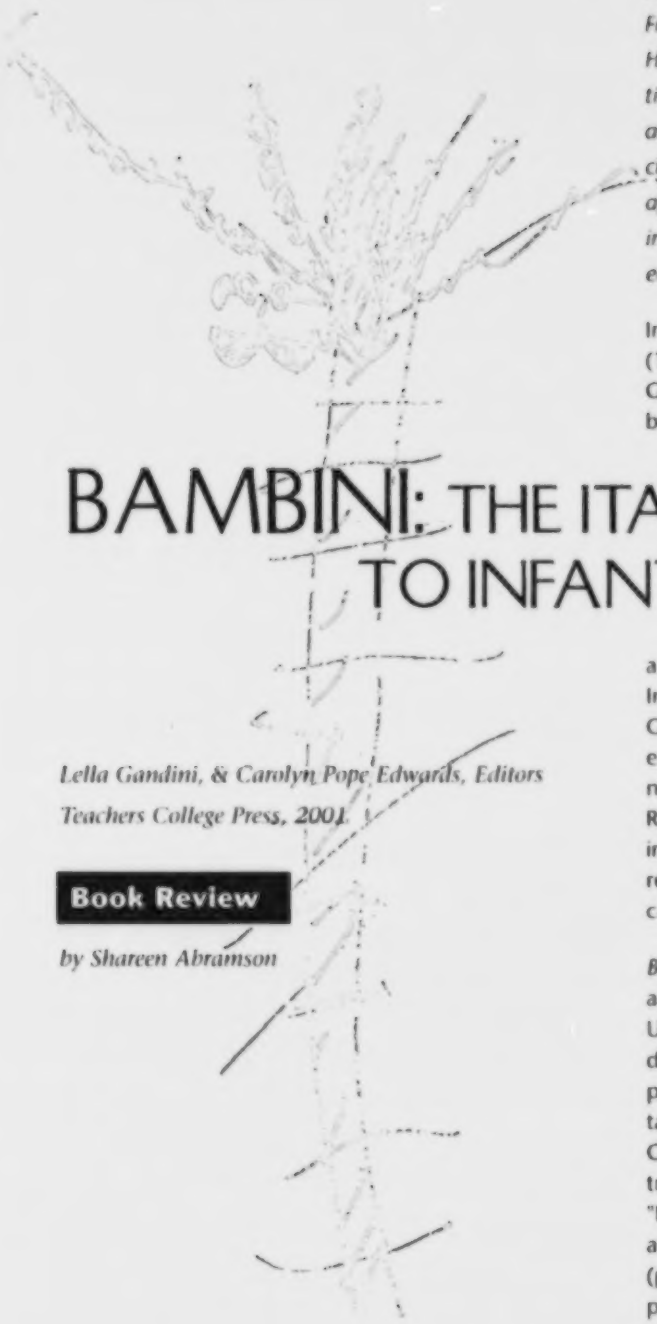
We reflect upon our daily life in the school with children and strive to give respect to the importance of these early years in developing the child's mind through building deep and meaningful relationships with both people and materials. Opening the school has been an important way to continue our self-reflection through the reflection of others. As we see ourselves thorough the eyes of others, we increase our commitment to the importance of our work, and support our own personal and professional growth.

Final Thoughts from the Three Schools

The narratives of our experiences, though unique in many ways, are woven together through our inspiration from Reggio Emilia, a dedication and commitment to the right of all children to quality early childhood education. Each of us, as school communities, has embarked on a journey of exploration, discovery and reflection in order to understand our work and ourselves. We are struck by the power of communication and collaboration as we have entered into a conversation and exchange around our experiences and the evolution of our identities within our own personal contexts.

From the perspective of three schools that have dedicated themselves to the process of evolution, the journey requires a strong commitment. In order to embark on this journey, one must embrace faith and courage. Traversing the road of evolution can be difficult at times, especially when one is continuously engaged in the process of self-inquiry. We need to remain open, alert and attentive to our own thoughts and ideas as well as to new perspectives. Throughout the process of evolution, a school must always consider and maintain a passion for the rights of children and a desire to create environments where quality early childhood education can occur. Inspired by the hope that radiates from the schools in Reggio Emilia, we seek to add our stories to other narratives of the possible . . . possibilities for children, for schools and for the future of education.

exploration . . .discovery
. . . reflection . . .



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BAMBINI: THE ITALIAN APPROACH TO INFANT/TODDLER CARE

Lella Gandini, & Carolyn Pope Edwards, Editors
Teachers College Press, 2001

Book Review

by Shareen Abramson

In the classic text, *The Hundred Languages of Children* (1993, 1998), edited by Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini and George Forman, multiple perspectives of both Reggio Emilian and American educators develop a foundation for studying the Reggio Emilia approach. In *Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care*, Gandini and Edwards have once again assembled an excellent team of educators from four diverse communities in the northern and central regions of Italy - Reggio Emilia, Milan, Parma and Pistoia - and also include contributions of knowledgeable U.S. educators regarding American programs and cross-cultural implications.

Bambini begins with an examination of the historical and political roots of infant and toddler care in the U.S. and Italy. Ron Lally overviews the significant divergences between U.S. and Italian perspectives, policies and practices that American educators must take into account. Susanna Mantovani and Patrizia Ghedini discuss Italian child care history, cultural traditions, policies and legal reforms, which lead to a "balanced model" of services that calls for "attention and responsibility for the child and parents together." (p. 31) Essential to the model is the presence of a professionally trained "caregiver-educator" able to organize stimulating, educational environments for parents and children, and sustain meaningful development of the relationships among those involved.

Three criteria define quality in the programs profiled in *Bambini*: "child well-being; family satisfaction; and professional dignity and work conditions." (p. 221) The contributors consider how these quality factors are manifested in full-day infant/toddler centers, *asili nido*, and in an array of services connected with centers including part-time programs, parent centers and counseling services. While the type of program may vary, each functions as a system of relationships working to create a coordinated network of resources to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness for families.

An example of an innovative service is "Time for Families," operated by the city of Milan since 1986. This parent-child activity program seeks to overcome parental feelings of isolation by offering a place and opportunities for parents to relate in new ways to their children, time for children to play and time for parents to socialize. Mantovani candidly shares the difficulties in parent-caregiver relationships: "There is a common tendency to overprotect and over-assist the parent . . . Parents may be seen as inadequate . . . and the caregiver may feel more confident and superior." (p. 73) Professional training is geared toward ameliorating this attitude. Caregivers are encouraged to act as "sensitive, discreet and nonintrusive role models, a reference for the family and a way to rebuild lost social experiences. They should be ready to let themselves be observed by the parents modeling a sound relationship with the child." (p. 74) This attitude of diffidence and openness allows parents and children to receive educational support and caregivers to become more aware of their own feelings in order to gain competence in assisting families.

Educators from Pistoia, Annalia Galardini and Donatella Giovannini, discuss the preparation of the environment in the infant toddler center. The physical and social space in the center needs to be "favorable," "rich," "predictable," "clear" and "evocative." (p. 89-91) Features include: softening and structuring the room with long, snake-like pillows; use of a puppet theatre for cultural, social and language development; and provision of a rich variety of learning resources, such as natural and aesthetic materials, that are multi-sensory, open-ended and encourage children's interest and continuing investigation. In these stimulating yet stable environments, children's cognitive and social development is encouraged, interactive relationships flourish and the teacher is able to assume the role of a "partner in play" by developing "an attitude of empathy toward children . . . to be able to encounter one another, listening without misunderstanding, without overriding the other's meaning, in harmony based on deep, mutual familiarity." (p. 98)

Tullia Musatti and Susanna Mayer look at the effects of educational setting on children's development. Their research reveals children's extended engagement with materials and their positive, synchronistic relationships with one another. These effects are attributed to program variables such as the use of integrated activities and the role of the perceptive teacher who recognizes "the meaning and cognitive goal of the child's activity and knows how to intervene wisely - not directly but [by] creating opportunities for thinking." (p. 178)

In the section on "Notable Practices: Strategies, Reasons and Narratives," ingenious yet practical ideas for creating authentic, participatory parent partnerships for sustaining relationships during children's first three years are described. According to Edwards and Gandini, the educational strategies seen in these Italian programs focus more on processes of learning and teaching rather than "products" or "measurable outcomes," the main concern of U.S. education. As Cristina Bondavalli suggests, teachers in communities like Reggio Emilia want to develop instead their "capacity to recognize happenings in the infant-toddler center as events that can have the potential for children to live through." (p. 63)

Readers already immersed in the study of the Reggio Emilia approach should find helpful the chapter on documentation by Lella Gandini and Jeanne Goldhaber. The constructive, communicative nature of documentation - involving daily, continual listening, observing, reflecting, sharing and interpreting - is stressed rather than its visual presentation. Goldhaber describes documentation as a cycle of inquiry, and gives examples from the Campus Children's Center at the University of Vermont to illustrate the stages in the cycle and ways that children's, teachers' and parents' lives are enriched by the documentation process.

Donatella Giovannini explains the strategy of constructing a *diario* (diary), a specific form of documentation, to capture children's experiences. In a case study of a child with "special rights" (needs), Gabri Magrini and Lella Gandini describe how sharing the diary becomes a means for enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and parents, fostering inclusion and interaction with other children, maximizing a child's learning possibilities and solidifying relationships among teachers, parents and children. The actual chronological entries and beautifully detailed color photos are informative as to the content, appearance and use of children's diaries. In a later chapter, Edwards and Gandini discuss interviews held with parents in Pistoia, and reveal how deeply affected the parents were upon receiving their child's *diario*, and learning how the teachers understood their child's unique personality and way of being.

A fundamental strategy for developing relationships, and ensuring well being and adjustment is *inserimento*, the gradual transition of the child and family into care. The duration of *inserimento* varies according to community preferences from several weeks to several months. Chiara Bove explains this "strategy for delicately beginning relationships and communications." (p. 109) Parent interviews and home visits are made long before children's entry into the program. To build familiarity and emotional security, visits to the center include both parents and children, with time in the center increased slowly. The teacher carefully orchestrates the welcoming of families into the center, and creates positive interactions among parents and children.

A major difference in the Italian approach to infant and toddler care is the explicit recognition of its cultural dimensions. In reflecting on the experience of programs in Pistoia, Galardini and Giovannini state, "We must . . . consider how services are rooted in a particular territory, in a particular culture."(p. 104) In their view, culture not only engenders the program but is an educational aim: "We submit that the task of adults - teachers and parents - is to transmit to children this sense of belonging to a community with a history . . . which is then reinterpreted in the schools and centers through each child's personal story, imagination, knowledge and life." (p. 104)

Thus these Italian early childhood programs, unlike most U.S. programs, are embedded in the cultural life of the Italian community.

In the view of educators in Reggio Emilia, the children's center is an impetus for cultural progress and renewal. In the words of Carlina Rinaldi, "Think of how much could change in this society, when a child emerges as a subject of life, a social subject, a citizen . . . the child is a producer of culture, values and rights competent in communicating with all the hundred languages."(p. 51) She continues: "For us in Reggio, the infant-toddler centers are places of life for children, teachers, and families - places . . . to create new culture . . . places in which we can offer to our society a new image of the child, a new image of childhood, and a new image of the teacher and new image of the family." (p. 54)

Bambini sheds light on the historical and political forces and shared values that have produced a number of noteworthy Italian infant/toddler programs. Their stories tell how a "culture of childhood" is created through community participation, empathic relationships, responsive educational approaches and critical reflection. By exploring differing Italian programs for very young children and their uniqueness, *Bambini* offers a more complete and complex vision of quality in Italian care and education than previously known as well as promising directions for efforts to elevate practices in other contexts. As Ron Lally sums up, "This book shows *how* good care can be provided and *that* good care can be provided to infants and toddlers. Let us take its messages to heart." (p. 22)

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CONFERENCE CALENDAR *see www.mpi.wayne.edu for regularly updated conference calendar*

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education.

*We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621, e-mail:***reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it**

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations *to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.*

Seeing the Voices of Children: Revisiting Documentation
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Amherst, MA
April 27, 2002
Presenters: Lella Gandini, George Forman & Dotty Meyer
Contact: Dotty Meyer
(413) 545-3199
e-mail: dotty@educ.umass.edu
web site:
www.umass.edu/preschool

Reggio Workshop
MacDonald Montessori Child Care
St. Paul, MN
April 27, 2002:
"Working with Materials,"
Louise Cadwell & Chuck Schwall
Contact: Beth MacDonald
e-mail: bethmacdonald@attbi.net

Chicago Commons Child Develoment Program
Chicago, IL.
May 2 & 3, 2002:
"Reggio Emilia Explorations: Learning Tour, Presentations and Discussion on Learning Environments"
Contact: Denise Romo
(773) 638-5600, ext. 7995
e-mail:
romod@chicagocommons.org

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators
Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University
Detroit, MI
May 4, 2002:
Brenda Fyfe, Webster University, *"The Relationship Between Documentation and Assessment"*
Contact: Judith Allen Kaminsky
(313) 872-1790
e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu,
web site: www.mpi.wayne.edu

2001-2002 Ohio Statewide Seminars
May 4, 2002:
Mary Jane Moran, University of Tennessee, *"Linking Art, Literacy and Project Work to Create Meaningful Learning Contexts for Young Children"*
Lakota EarlyChildhood Center
Cincinnati, OH
Contact: Connie Vale,
Early Childhood Education
449-B E. State St., Athens, OH
e-mail:
connie.vale@ode.state.oh.us

The Innovative Teacher Project Roundtables
May 5, 2002:
Image of the Child and Project Work
Rosenberg Early Childhood Center, Jewish Community Center of San Francisco
Contact: Ronnie Jacobs
(415) 292-1282

June 8, 2002:
Revisit the Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach in the Context of your School
Joyce M. Huggins
Early Education Center, California State University, Fresno
Contact: Shareen Abramson
(559) 278-0226

For general information, contact:
Susan Lyon
The Innovative Teacher Project
(415) 397-8211
e-mail: titp@pacbell.net

"The Hundred Languages of Children" Exhibit Seminar Series
COSI
Columbus, OH

May 17 or May 18, 2002:
Carolyn Edwards, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, *"Cultivating Quality in Infant-Toddler Care: Improving Experiences Through Partnership Between Families and Educators in Italy"*

September 20 or
September 21, 2002:
Dee Smith & Barbara Burrington, University of Vermont, *"Community, Space and Culture: The Geography of Childhood"*

Contact: Connie Vale
e-mail:
connie.vale@ode.state.oh.us

The Program for Collaborative Learning
Carnegie Mellon Cyert Center for Early Education
Pittsburgh, PA

Saturday Seminar Series 2001-2002
May 18, 2002:
"The Educator as Learner: Communicating our Learning through Documentation," Sonya Shoptaugh & Cyert Center educators
Contact: Judy Abrams
(412) 268-5470
e-mail: jabrams@andrew.cmu.edu
web site: www.cmu.edu/cyert-center

Making Learning Visible: Inspirations from Reggio Emilia
Lesley University
Cambridge, MA
May 18 & 19, 2002
Presenters: Brenda Fyfe, Jennifer Strange, Cheryl Brieg-Allen/St. Louis team; Mara Krechevsky & Ben Mardell, Harvard University Project Zero & Cambridgeport Children's Center educators/Cambridge team
Contact: Mary Mindess
(617) 349-8922
(800) 999-1959, ext. 8922
e-mail: mmindess@mail.lesley.edu,
web site:
www.lesley.edu/faculty/mmindess/reggio/home.html

Teachers as Protagonists of a Community of Learners
Make a Mess and Make Believe School
Boulder, CO
June 13-15, 2002
Presenters include: Amelia Gambetti, Lori Geismar-Ryan, Catherine Katz, Mary Hartzell, Kris Sanchez, Simonetta Cittadini-Medina, Ana Pineda, Emanuella Vercalli, Ellen Hall, & the pedagogical team & teachers of Make a Mess and Make Believe School.
Contact: Ellen Hall
(303) 443-8909
e-mail: ehall820@aol.com

Exploring a Pedagogy of Listening and Relationships
Children's Museum 2nd Generation
Portland, OR
June 18-22, 2002
Presenters include Louise Cadwell, Judy Graves, Will Parnell & Oregon educators & parents
Contact: Monique Levesque
(503) 231-1485

Reggio in Reno: Introductions and Deeper Understandings
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV
June 25-27, 2002
Presenters include George Forman, Brenda Fyfe, Leah Sanders, Alise Shafer & Patricia Hunter McGrath
Contact: Eva Essa
e-mail: essa@unr.nevada.edu

Community, Space and Culture: The Landscape of Childhood
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT
August 14 & 15, 2002
Contact: Jeanne Goldhaber
e-mail: jgoldhab@zoo.uvm.edu
or Dee Smith
e-mail: dcsmith@zoo.uvm.edu

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Delegation Days
The College School, Clayton Schools' Family Center & The St. Michael School
St. Louis, MO
October 24-26,
November 7-9, 2002
Contact: Michael Holohan, St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Coordinator
(314) 324-4940
e-mail: mpholohan@earthlink.net

CONFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST

Child Development Centers for the 21st Century: The Institute for Child Care Design
Harvard University Graduate School of Design
Cambridge, MA
June 17-21, 2002
Faculty: Jim Greenman, Mike Lindstrom & Robin Moore
Contact: web site:
www.brighthorizons.com

Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Appproach
Robert Allerton Conference Center
Monticello IL
August 11-15, 2002
Instructors: Lilian Katz & Sylvia Chard
Contact:
(877) 455-2687 (toll-free)
fax (217) 333-9561
e-mail:
engaging@mail.conted.uiuc.edu

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Reggio Children USA Office for Publications
(Carol Brunson Day)
c/o Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009
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American Academy in Rome
Via Angelo Masina, 5, 00153 Roma, Italy
39-06-58310928, fax 39-06-5810788 (at Academy)
e-mail: l.gandini@aarome.org
(**temporary address for five years, beginning on August 20, 1998**)

"THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN" EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

February 2 - December 31, 2002
COSI, 333 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH
Contact: COSI • (614) 228-COSI •
web site: www.cosi.org

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fax (202) 265-9161
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Child Care Information Exchange
P.O. Box 3249, Redmond, WA 98073-3249
(800) 221-2864,
web site: www.childcareexchange.com

Learning Materials Workshop
(800) 693-7164,
e-mail: mail@learningmaterialswork.com,
web site:
www.learningmaterialswork.com/shop/reggio.html

REGGIO EMILIA STUDY TOUR INFORMATION

Angela Ferrario works with the offices of Reggio Children to organize study tours of the Reggio Emilia municpal infant-toddler centers and preschools. The May 25 - June 1, 2002 study tour to Reggio Emilia has reached full capacity. Dates for the next study tour have not yet been determined by REGGIO CHILDREN. Angela's voicemail message is always kept up to date with current information about the next study tour. As soon as the dates are scheduled, registration information will be posted on the Reggio list serv and in *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange.* Typically, the study tour is scheduled no later than the annual NAEYC conference in November and study tour information is available at the Reggio Children booth at the conference. Reggio Children determines dates as part of their yearly scheduling of many study tours from several countries, including the U.S.

For information, contact:
Angela Ferrario
(202) 337-9191, e-mail: aferrario@worldbank.org

NEW RESOURCE

Haigh, Karen, Rodriquez, Diane and Schroeder, Gigi, "A Study of Hands: Chicago Commons Explores Reggio Emilia," *Child Care Information Exchange,* March/April 2002, #144.

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, contact these organizations:

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
2460 16th St. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202)265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
web site: http://www.cdacouncil.org

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr., Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386,
fax (217) 333-3767
e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu (Bernard Cesarone)
web site: http://ericeece.org/
Reggio Emilia section - http://ericeece.org/reggio.html

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Wayne State University
71 E. Ferry Ave.,
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web site: http://www.mpi.wayne.edu

Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria, 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-05220455416,
fax 39-0522-455621
e-mail: reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it

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To subscribe, send a message to: listserv@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu. Leave the subject line blank. Just type: **subscribe REGGIO-L YourFirstName YourLastName** in the first line of the message area.

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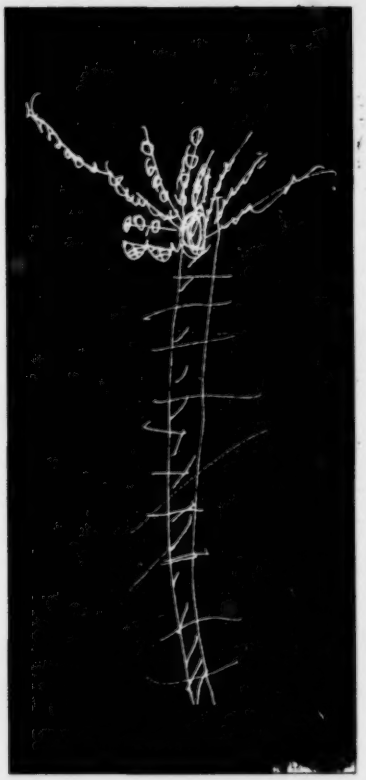

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The Evolution of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia: An Interview with Sandra Piccinini

By Amelia Gambetti

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Role of Culture and Community in Children's Learning and Development: An Interview with Barbara Bowman

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance Formed

Conference Calendar

New Resources

PS 031133

Sandra Piccinini is the Commissioner of Education and Culture of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Amelia Gambetti is the Coordinator of Reggio Children and Liaison for Consultancy in Schools.

With this interview, we would like to convey a sense of a history of the experience of the Reggio municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools, which continues to evolve and renew, and is still growing today, due to the commitment of many protagonists. This experience has been one of continuous research for innovative answers to the questions of today and the ones the future may bring to us.

Amelia: A long and adventurous journey links early childhood education to the city of Reggio Emilia . . .

Sandra: It has been an extraordinary adventure of, mainly, women and also men who have worked with intelligence and passion, day after day, and made it possible. It has been an experience that has been renewed over time because of the awareness of societal changes and new scientific learning about children. The experience continues today, sometimes challenging and sometimes difficult, but one that has given joy and learning to many children, promises great hope for the future, and produces a continuous dialogue between the children and the city.

A: Howard Gardner has said that, "the most important success of the experience of Reggio Emilia is the educational community" that has been created.

S: In fact, another American colleague of ours, Jerome Bruner, has said that it is not possible to understand the Reggio schools without understanding the city and the community.

continued on next page

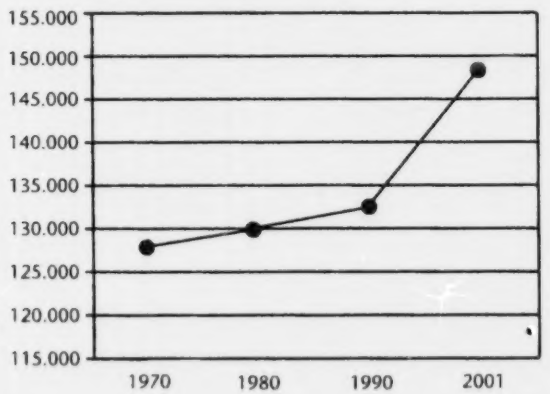
A: Tell us how the relationships between the schools for young children and the city have developed, and about the primary problems you are facing today.

S: It has been a history of hard work and joy, of conflicts and continuous discussion. Howard Gardner has also observed, "there cannot be absence of conflicts in a dynamic entity." For example, the relationship with the Catholic Church was not easy, especially at the beginning. Political conflicts between the majority and minority representatives at the municipal level have been very challenging, and they continue today.

A: Would you elaborate on the distinctive aspects of the city of Reggio Emilia today?

S: Reggio Emilia is a city of 148,500 inhabitants (12/01), located in the Emilia Romagna region, one of the wealthiest regions in northern Italy. In recent years, the city has been changing rapidly. The population of Reggio Emilia consistently grew in the past thirty years but in the last ten years, the growth has been notable - more than 18,000 inhabitants in 10 years.

Inhabitants of Reggio Emilia
(1970-2001)



The main reasons for this significant growth are: an increase in life expectancy in Italy and throughout Europe; an increase in birth rate unique to Reggio Emilia as compared with neighboring cities; and significant growth in immigration due to an economy that attracts manpower from southern Italy and many countries outside Europe.

I'd like to examine these factors in depth. In our city, an increased life expectancy means that about 10,000 elderly people live alone. More than half of the people who live alone are elderly women, predominantly widows. The increase in the birth rate began in 1986. At one time, Reggio was one of the cities with the lowest birth rate in northern Italy. Reggio's birth rate decreased steadily in the '70s and '80s but currently, the birth rate is once again approaching that of the '70s. Because of the low birth rate in the '80s, there are not many young people. Young boys and girls under the age of 18 represent only 16% of the population, while people over 60 years of age comprise 26% of the population of the city.

Immigrants make up 6% of the population of Reggio Emilia. The number of immigrants increased from 2,400 immigrants in 1991 to 9,000 in 2001. By and large, immigrants are younger than the rest of the population. They represent 11% of the population between 25 and 39 years of age. The children of immigrants represent 10% of the population from birth to 4 years of age. Thus, the increase in birth rate and immigration in the city of Reggio Emilia has reversed the aging trend of its population.

A: So Reggio Emilia is a city facing many changes.

S: For the first time, Reggio Emilia is encountering the phenomenon of mass immigration, the exchange and confrontation of many groups from different countries. In Reggio, there are more than 100 ethnic groups. The biggest group came from Morocco in the '80s and since then, immigrants have arrived from China, Albania, Ghana, Tunisia, Egypt, and many other countries including those in eastern Europe.

A: So, a new city of Reggio now exists . . .

S: Yes, the "new Reggio" will become more visible in the next few years through the transformation of places that will become symbols of this change. The main transformations will be north of the city where large industries were traditionally located. The municipality of Reggio Emilia bought an old factory

in this area in order to create a "house of dance." The municipality also bought the old cheese warehouse of Locatelli near the location of Remida, the Creative Recycling Center, in order to create an international Center for Early Childhood. This will be a center of encounter among different cultures around issues of professional development and education. Many industrial cities in the world are currently converting industrial spaces that are no longer used. Reggio Emilia is trying to pursue a cultural use for these spaces, so that culture becomes "productive." The places of work of the last century are transformed into the places of work of today, with an emphasis on being able to do and think together!

Communities cannot make innovative and necessary changes when culture is separated from the contexts of the school.

- Sandra Piccinini

A: How do you feel these changes will affect the character of the city?

S: The city is taking some major risks in facing these changes. There is a great deal of concern about the decisions that have to be made. Is this concern rooted in fear, a fear of losing what we already have? A city like Reggio Emilia with a healthy economy and vibrant social system could become conservative and complacent. I believe that our task is to fight against any movement toward conservatism.

A: How do you believe this task can be achieved?

S: First of all, I believe we must make a greater cultural investment in our individual citizens. In the last few years, we have increased our investment in the development of the university in Reggio. We feel that a citizenry with a higher cultural and educational level will be better able to face the complexity of a more diverse society.

We are also working toward this goal by ensuring a strong connection between school and culture. In this regard, we are developing interesting experiences in the community by organizing exhibitions with the collaboration of the schools. I believe that school and culture cannot be separate. The school produces culture that is constantly renewed when, as in Reggio, there is respect for young people and what they bring to the schools and to life. But often, this is not recognized. Communities cannot make innovative and necessary changes when culture is separated from the contexts of the school.

We are also working on how to maintain strong citizen participation the city of Reggio Emilia. In the midst of these great changes, it is necessary to re-define our agreements with our citizens, because we cannot take our shared values for granted. This challenge has been faced by American society some time ago. We know that there are not predetermined recipes that work for everyone. Each community has to be able to find its own way in relation with others, through the exchange of experiences.

In a period like this one, full of changes and fear for the future, it is even more important to recognize that the children are subjects of rights and they bring to us their own culture because, as Loris Malaguzzi used to remind us with great strength, this creates "essential premises for a higher condition of citizenship of the person and of his relations among human beings." I believe that Reggio Emilia is trying to do this: to create premises for a multiethnic future, respecting all the people and the collective sense of citizenship . . . planning its future in order to continue innovating and dreaming along with our friends around the world who work with us.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: An Interview with Barbara Bowman

By Judith Allen Kaminsky with the collaboration of Lella Gandini

Barbara Bowman is one of three faculty founders of the Erikson Institute in Chicago, Illinois and served as president of the institute from 1994 to 2001. She is an authority on early education, a national advocate for improved and expanded training for practitioners who teach and care for young children, and a pioneer in building knowledge and understanding of the issues of access and equity for minority children. Barbara served as chair of the Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy of the National Research Council and is one of the editors of the committee's report, Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers, *which was published in 2001. The following interview took place on April 26, 2002.*

JUDITH: My colleague, Lella Gandini, attended the plenary session of the Zero to Three conference in San Diego last December and was particularly impressed with your presentation, which was based on the report, *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers.* I would like to discuss your perspective on some of the committee's findings and recommendations, and the implications for practice, teacher education, research and policy. The report states that an important motivation for the sponsors of this study was to help public discussion of these issues move away from ideology and toward evidence, so that educators, parents, and policy makers will be able to make better decisions about programs for the education and care of young children. What motivated you to be a part of this initiative and what were your hopes for this project?

BARBARA: For a long time, I've been concerned that minority children who don't succeed in school are perceived of as developmental failures. The perception is that there are problems with their families, their genes or their environments that account for their failure to learn. I have lived and worked in low-income communities all over the world, and although the number of children who are at developmental risk is considerably higher in poverty communities, the vast majority of children in those communities in the United States are developmentally normal. At birth, there is little difference in the potential of young children, but the differences in what children know and are able to do become greater as the children get older. As a result, I became very interested in the role of culture in children's learning. I am also interested in the role the social group plays in defining what is normal development and how development is exhibited.

Successful achievement of developmental milestones is essential to learning. But if you grow up poor in the United States, your opportunities to learn and what people want you to learn are very different than if you grow up middle class. You can be developmentally competent and not learn in school because the ways that you have been taught to display your competence don't match the demands of school. There is a break between the competence the child has learned and the demands of the school environment. There have been many studies that show that children can be competent in one context and not another. For instance, there is a study of children who can figure out in their heads the prices for selling different combinations of candy and cigarettes, but are unable to perform simple school arithmetic.

J: Is your desire to understand that disparity?

B: Yes. Why do low-income children not do better in school? What gets in the way and can we do anything about it? What do we expect children to know and be able do? For a long time, we have believed that those school skills and knowledge are implicit to development. To a large extent, much of the early work in nursery schools was based on the assumption that you do not need to directly teach literacy to children. If you just offer them opportunities to learn, they'll automatically learn to read and write well. I think this is true of middle class children living in an environment in which school-related knowledge and skills are embedded. They pick up an enormous amount of knowledge simply by living with people who think and act in a way consistent with the demands of school. The problem comes where you have children who live in an environment that does not sponsor school skills and yet they are expected to learn in school. So opportunity to learn has interested me over the last thirty years, particularly as it relates to low-income and minority children.

We know that some of the things children learn in their homes and communities interfere with their abilities to learn in school. For example, some children live in home environments where adults don't ask questions that require a child to display his knowledge. When the child goes to school, the first thing the teacher does is ask a question designed to encourage him to share what he knows. For instance, she might ask, "What color is this?" The child knows that the teacher already knows the name of the color. But if, in past experiences, adults have only asked him questions to which they do not know the answer, the child becomes confused and is likely to say, "I don't know" because he doesn't understand what the question means. It's not that he can't answer it, it's just that he has had no experience with this mode of questioning, and he doesn't know what set of experiences and memories to draw upon to answer.

Many low-income children in middle class non-directive classrooms find themselves in this situation. They don't understand what the teachers want them to do. They may be used to adults who tell them the answers to questions. They don't understand the social context in which children are not given clear directives about what their behavior ought to be. So there may be real conflicts between how children have learned to think and what schools expect.

J: This leads to many implications for early childhood educators. The Executive Summary of *Eager to Learn* begins with the premise that right from birth, a healthy child is an active participant in his or her growth. Can you elaborate on your thoughts regarding the young child's predisposition to learn?

B: The baseline of children's development is the capacity to adapt to the environment in which they find themselves. There are implicit triggers that make this possible, such as: the ability to form social relationships, the ability to acquire language and the ability to make category systems. Yet because there is such a difference in what environments offer to children in terms of their learning, how children learn to display their developmental competence varies greatly. Children learn what is considered appropriate in the community in which they live. The more what a child has learned differs from the expectations of the school environment, the more difficult it is for her to learn in school.

So it seems to me that there are two tasks to be accomplished if we want all children to be successful in school. The first task is to determine the ways of thinking, the skills and knowledge that presage school success. What are the social/emotional, cognitive lessons that children must learn to facilitate their learning? Learning is a building process that depends on prior knowledge in order to develop more complex ideas.

Secondly, we must find out what children already know, the equivalent knowledge that children have already acquired, even if it looks different from what we expect. A simple example: children may learn to form relationships with adults in different ways . . . some kiss, some shake hands, some bow. Their prior experience forming relationships with adults enables them to form relationships with teachers. But children won't automatically know how to behave within these new relationships. What teachers must do is to create the conditions that help children to use what they already know to master the new tasks, to use their developmental competence to learn new skills. So, in this example, the teacher must help the children see that they can draw on past experience in forming relationships with the teachers, but the behaviors within the relationships are different. In this way, children can become bi-cultural by having more than one way to express a concept. We have to help them become bi-cultural so they can be successful in school.

J: Isn't the task of the early childhood educator to understand the culture of the children, their families and the community? Isn't it the teacher's responsibility to understand the learning styles of the children, to encourage and support children to make the transition from the culture of their community to the culture of school?

B: We have had great difficulty changing the perspective of low-income and minority children in 2 1/2 hours a day during two years of preschool. Some experimental programs have had very good luck educating low-income children who are enrolled in the program from birth. Many children who begin their school experience at five or six years of age have been relatively unsuccessful in making that transition to the culture of school.

J: Understanding the family, the culture and the community where a child is living will help teachers and caregivers understand the child's abilities, motivations and intentions so they will be able to support their learning. If children have the predisposition to learn, and their experiences and environments support their learning . . .

B: Yes, children have the predisposition to learn and teachers need to not only understand what children have already learned, but what they may not have learned or what they have learned that interferes with school learning. If they do not have the foundation of skills for school, we must see that they acquire them.

J: Our readers are early childhood educators and I'd like to discuss the opportunities that they can offer to children while they are in their programs. Teachers have to offer the environments and experiences that support an interest in learning, a motivation for learning. Of course, the school environment into which those children will be moving has to be considered.

B: Even before the teacher considers the environment, I think the teacher has to believe that the child is developmentally competent, that he can learn and he wants to learn, that he has learned in the past and he will learn in the future. Our task is to see that every child has the opportunity to prepare for school learning. This means we must first decide what children should learn and then frame the learning experience in such a way that all children do learn. This is the focus of *Eager to Learn*. We have identified some of the things that children need to learn. For example, school learning consists of the ability to handle symbols and to represent thought in graphic form. School learning requires familiarity with certain vocabulary and the ability to use language receptively and expressively in great detail. To my mind, the major question is: How do you help all children learn what they need to know? Teachers working cross-culturally must be able to speed up the process so that these children will not be behind when they get to school. This is not easy but essential.

J: You believe that children in disadvantaged communities should be in a preschool experience for a longer period of time. The committee's report articulates one of the most fundamental concerns of early childhood educators, namely that the growing consensus regarding the importance of early education stands in stark contrast to the disparate system of care and education available to children in the United States in the preschool years. Are you optimistic that the dialogue between early childhood educators and policy makers will lessen this disparity?

. . . there may be
real conflicts between
how children have learned
to think and what schools
expect.

- Barbara Bowman

B: I'm not terribly optimistic. Today, most Americans seem to believe that it doesn't make a lot of difference how you care for and educate young children. I also think many people believe that there's something wrong with poor and minority children that prevents them from learning, and it's a waste of money for the government to pay high prices for Head Start and other such programs since many low-income children are still doing poorly in school after 37 years of Head Start. It would help if teachers were better educated and it doesn't have to be formal education. The "magic" of the Reggio experience is that, through in-service education, teachers can develop the ability to think intellectually so they are able to stimulate the cognitive growth of children.

J: In Reggio, they view the teacher as a researcher and teachers have the respect for children that motivates them to be interested in *how* the children are learning.

B: That's a very scientifically oriented perspective: look at the evidence and draw conclusions. It is a way of thinking about the world that is unfamiliar to many people. The Reggio early childhood program puts teachers in situations in which they're asked to be researchers. Yet Reggio teachers don't study children alone. They work with people who have studied education, who can guide them, make suggestions, and help them move in the direction of thinking intellectually. They formulate an environment for children, which enables both children and teachers to begin to think the same way.

But we aren't providing that kind of education for teachers in this country. High school graduation is the standard requirement for most of our child care workers. We've just begun to ask Head Start teachers to get a degree. We do little or no substantive in-service education with teachers.

J: Many Head Start programs are requiring that teachers use pre-set curriculums that rely on rote memorization.

B: The other day, I was at a school where the children were memorizing the names of the letters in their names but did not know the shape of the letter nor did they know the letters had sounds attached to them. If you accept the notion that there are certain things that teachers need to teach children, then the next question is: Are there better ways to do this? I don't think this was a particularly good way to help children gain literacy skills.

One of the things we have done in early education is to look at curriculum as a set of activities, and not pay much attention to what children are supposed to learn and how it is best to teach particular children. For example, the notion that you should read stories to children is pervasive in the early childhood community. But we don't seem to understand that if you read in a particular way, very consciously focused on vocabulary, for example, children will gain greater understanding of the meaning of words and the use of sounds, etc. We can offer children opportunities to learn but we have to be aware that how we structure opportunities might hasten or delay the process of learning what we are trying to teach. Teachers who do not know how to plan this kind of a curriculum may need the help of a pre-set curriculum. I would hope that teachers would know enough to decide on their own curriculum since it would most likely be more specific to the learner, which means he or she should learn more and better.

J: It is also essential for teachers to know how to recognize what children are learning, then document this process and make it visible, so that parents and administrators *understand* what the children are learning.

B: Teachers must be able to make those connections. Very often, teachers document development but they do not track *how* they stimulated particular kinds of learning in particular children or the evidence that the children *are* learning. Because we don't separate school learning from development, we make the incorrect assumption that there's something wrong with children who haven't learned what we expected them to learn. Instead, there may be something wrong with how we teach.

J: How can preschool teachers support young children's ability to understand school learning and the expectations of the school environment?

B: First of all, we need to find out whether the children are developmentally competent. There's no question that low-income children often live in more hazardous environments and may have some kind of developmental problem. Many low-income children have unbelievably high lead levels, for instance. Some have had many different caregivers and no stable relationship with anyone in their family. Some may live in chaotic circumstances with drug-addicted parents. There's no question that there are more children at developmental risk in low-income communities, and what you do with those children may be quite different than what you do with typically developing children. However, the vast majority of children from low-income families are developmentally competent. Their home environments are adequate to support their learning. They have the developmental capacity to learn but they just don't know the things that lead to school success. How do we give them the opportunity to learn those things?

J: Yes, and how do teachers identify what children need to learn in order to be successful in school?

B: That was one of our goals in *Eager to Learn*. First of all, we studied the effect of many variables on learning ability: income, relative age within the group, race and ethnicity, mother's education, interaction styles. Then we outlined the content necessary to prepare a child for school: scientific reasoning, math, literacy and language. We also emphasized the importance of assessing children's learning. Assessment is a problem when teachers do not know enough about child development or early education. To assess children, teachers must have basic normative knowledge of children's abilities in various stages of development. Teachers must have a clear notion of standards to be achieved. The problem is that many teachers don't understand either normative development or the expected learning standards. They simply rely on judgements based on their personal experience, which may not give an accurate assessment of children's learning.

J: Assessments can also be very superficial when they don't reflect an understanding of children's learning ability and potential.

B: Yes, there is a problem if teachers only depend upon academic performance for assessments. There is a very subtle relationship between intellectual development and specific academic skills. The desired underpinning for academics is cognition and intellectual development. We need to ensure that school learning is well supported by intellectual understanding. Just memorizing the right answer is not good enough.

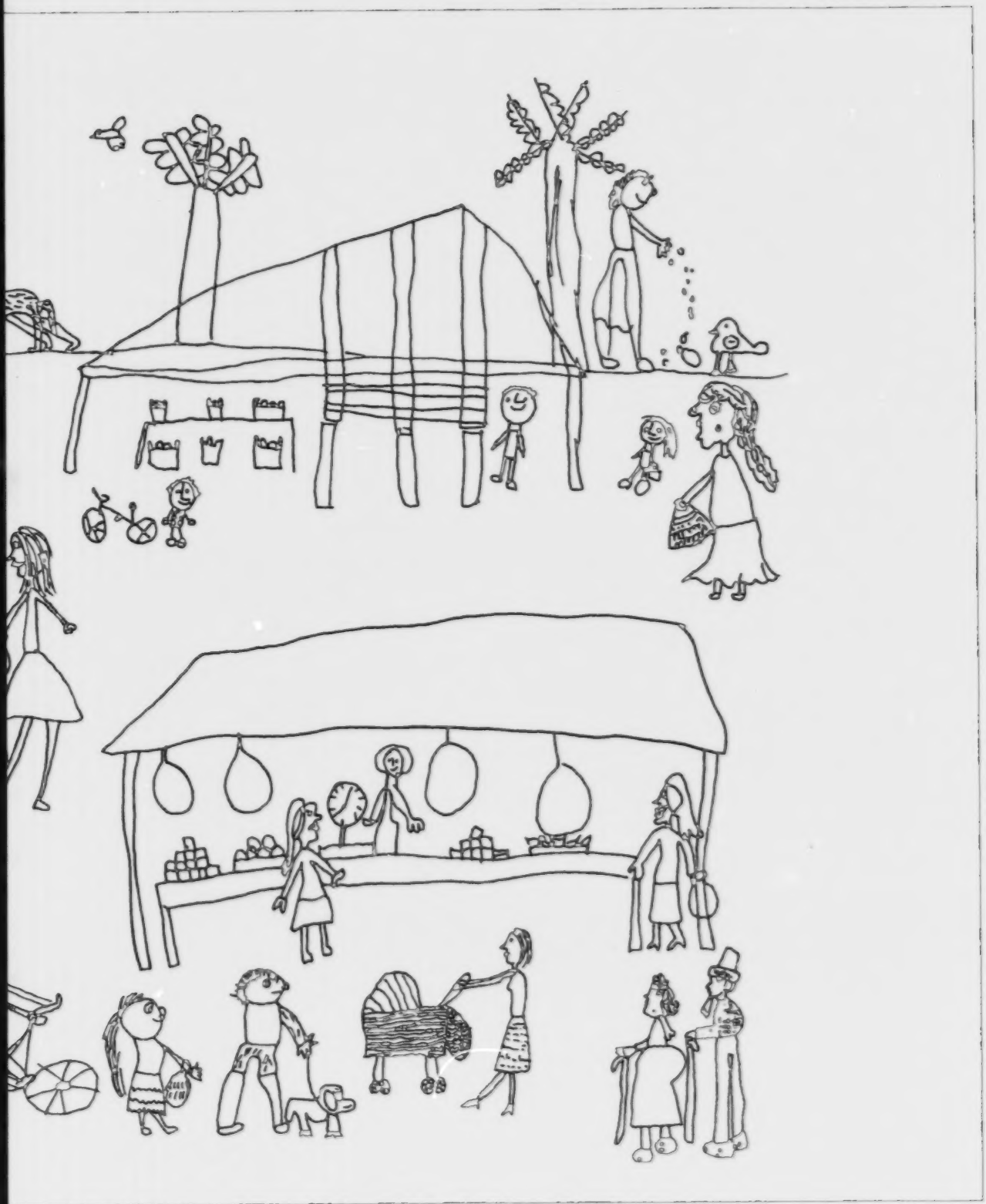
J: A key point in *Eager to Learn* is respect and consideration for individual and developmental differences among children by creating learning experiences that build on and extend children's competence, that are challenging but within reach. Would you elaborate on this point?

Very often, teachers document development but they do not track how *they stimulated particular kinds of learning in particular children or the evidence that the children* are *learning.*

- Barbara Bowman

B: Providing a variety of opportunities to learn is essential since children are at not at the same place in their learning. I think it is useful to create situations where older children and younger children play and learn together so there are opportunities for children to learn at different levels and at different paces. We know that when you offer multiple, in-depth opportunities to learn, you can indeed influence what it is more children learn.

"IL MERCATO DI PIAZZA FONTANESI" autori i bambini di 5 anni della S.C.I. Anna frank



J: What about the tendency of American educators to label children with disabilities because they're not responding in a way the teacher considers developmentally competent?

B: I think we sometimes force teachers to label children as disabled because the only other alternative is that they're not good teachers. Many teachers do not have enough knowledge about how to work with children with special needs. They don't know how a child with spina bifida might view the world differently. They have no idea what to do with ADHD children who are on medication. They don't know how to support a child with Down syndrome who can learn to read but only with very careful instruction. We're expecting teachers to ensure that all children reach high standards together, yet they don't often have the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve that goal.

J: Your committee recommended that teachers of young children have bachelor's degrees with appropriate specialization.

B: If teachers have a college education, they are more apt to know how people who are schooled think and interact with one another. They are familiar with habits that are necessary for school success. They've already mastered them in their own lives so they are more able to pass on these dispositions and habits to children.

J: How can we reconcile these recommendations with the reality of the field?

B: I think there is reason for hope. Head Start has raised its standards for teacher education so it is evident that more people understand the importance of educated teachers. I think other programs will follow. Once we have appropriate training and salaries that are reasonably commensurate for BA level teachers, we can expect teachers to be professionals. If teachers want to be treated like professionals and paid professional salaries, it is their responsibility to keep up to date in their field. In France, all preschool teachers have BA degrees and required in-service. There are supporting staff that have lunch with the children so the teachers have planning time. Many U.S. programs have time for in-service education but the programs are often poorly planned and implemented.

J: The community that our readers represent is very concerned about mandated standards, curriculum and achievement testing. Yet it is possible to meet those standards in ways that are consistent with our early childhood philosophy and practice when teachers are able to recognize the learning that's taking place.

B: I agree. Play, for instance, is an important component of early childhood programs that can contribute to achieving high standards in care and education. If the teacher knows where she'd like to go and checks to make sure she's going there, if the relationship between the teacher and the children is strong, play can be an effective means for learning. Children who play are more likely to learn and the learning will be richer because it will be embedded in a larger intellectual framework.

J: So teachers must have an attitude of reflection at all times - observing, evaluating how the children are learning, and then documenting the experience and making it visible. I've observed that teachers who are just beginning to understand the value of this process may document how children use particular areas of the classroom and what they may be learning during these experiences. That's an effective form of communication to parents and administrators, which can address how mandated standards are being met.

B: We have to educate teachers about how to integrate standards with curriculum planning to create a rich program.

J. The Executive Summary outlined the features of quality preschool programs and I found one statement particularly interesting: Children are better prepared for school when early childhood programs expose them to a variety of classroom structures, thought processes and discourse patterns. Can you elaborate on that?

B: *Eager to Learn* makes it clear that there is no single curriculum or method that ensures all children will learn the same thing at the same time. Variety, richness and intensity are important characteristics of effective curricula. My own perspective on educating low-income children is sometimes misinterpreted. Some people think I mean we should set rigid, minute teaching objectives for children and that teachers

The mission of school should be understanding, not merely performance.

- Barbara Bowman

should teach them directly. I believe that knowledge or information must fit into a larger intellectual, cognitive structure if it is going to be maximally usable in the future.

Many children memorize the first two to three years of math but they don't have those number facts or times tables in any kind of usable intellectual framework. So in fourth and fifth grade, when they're expected to embed those memorized systems into problem solving, they're lost. When memorization exists independent of the conceptual framework, children are not likely to be able to transfer to the next level of understanding. The mission of school should be understanding, not merely performance.

J: This report speaks to the "great potential in the use of assessment to support learning." How can educators use assessment to advocate for early childhood care and education?

B: We need a marketing strategy. We are so busy telling people what's right and true, and what we believe in our hearts that we haven't looked at why people are unwilling to do what we are asking. Why is it that parents are unwilling to pay more money for child care? Why is it that people are unable to understand that how we take care of children today affects how many jails we have to build tomorrow? Why is it we can't communicate what is necessary to convince people of the value of early care and education? Somehow, we have to send community leaders and policy makers a message that relates to their reality.

J: Do you think we should emphasize assessment as a tool for advocacy in our professional development programs?

B: Yes, but first teachers have to understand curriculum development. Schools use package curriculums because teachers don't know how to develop their own. The majority of teachers in child care and Head Start have to learn how to derive curriculum from assessment.

J: That is one of the reasons that assessment is oversimplified and prescriptive.

B: I believe that our best bet is to tie curriculum and assessment to one another so that teachers can understand the relationship between what they do and children's learning.

J: It seems to me that the Erikson Institute has been very responsive to the evolution of the early childhood field by offering opportunities to early childhood educators and students to learn how to work in innovative ways with children.

B: We believe that development is the framework, and is responsive to culture and to the genetic capacity of human beings. We focus on social-emotional development, cognitive development, health and physical development. Then we concentrate on how to apply this knowledge of development in a variety of different contexts, such as education, assessment and working with parents. We work very hard to emphasize the translation of development into practice, the use of development to inform practice.

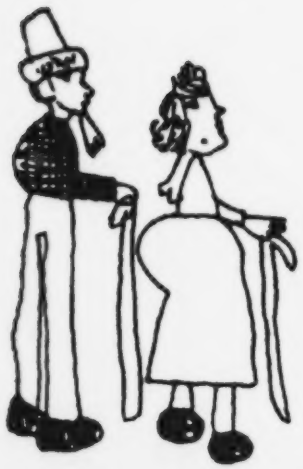
J: Throughout your career as an educator and as an advocate for children, you have come to know, influence and support many in diverse situations. Would you reflect on some episodes that have been memorable for you?

B: I received my bachelor's degree at Sarah Lawrence College. I did practice teaching in Bronxville, New York, in a second-grade classroom with 15 children. I also did some practice teaching at the Sarah Lawrence Lab School. After I graduated, I decided to try to get a job in Chicago Public Schools. They sent me out to see a kindergarten program where the teacher had 50 children in the morning and 50 children in the afternoon. When I was there, she was playing a piano with a mirror on it so she could see what the children were doing behind her. She was able to play the piano and maintain control of the children in the classroom. I knew that I had learned nothing at Sarah Lawrence Nursery School and Bronxville Public School that would help me do what this teacher did every day. So I decided to go to graduate school at the University of Chicago and worked as an assistant teacher in their nursery school.

In 1954, my husband was drafted into the army and we moved to Denver, Colorado. I taught at a college nursery school and also taught child development at the college. My child development course began with conception and the role of genetics. After my first class, I was called to the president's office. He told me that, at this college, child development begins the day after the baby is born. These students grew up on ranches and knew how to make a bull fertilize a cow but the school would not give them any information about human sexuality!

Probably the most earth-shaking experience I've had was when I lived in southern Iran in the mid to late 50's. I was asked to visit a day care center designed for low-income Jewish and Muslim children. The culture was so different from anything that I knew. I remember thinking, I don't even know where to start! My only suggestion was that the teachers stand next to the slide when the children were sliding down. It was the only thing I could see! They were speaking a language I didn't understand. My knowledge of child development was really challenged. I also worked with Red Lion Sun, the Red Cross equivalent in Iran, at an orphanage. This was the first place I ever saw failure-to-thrive babies who suffered from relationship deprivation. My experiences in Iran motivated my interest in development and culture, and the interrelationship between them.

Children who



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and the learning will
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- Barbara Bowman

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance Formed

On Wednesday, November 20, 2002 during the NAEYC annual conference in New York, the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) guiding board will be hosting a reception and meeting at the Marriott Marquis Hotel from 5-8pm. The focus of the meeting will be the emerging identity, history, current status and opportunties for membership in NAREA. The reception and meeting will include representation by Reggio Children, and introduction of board members and the executive committee of NAREA.

IDENTITY

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance is a network of educators, parents and advocates seeking to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children.

MISSION

- To promote and defend the rights of children, educators and families, of all cultures and class, to exemplary early childhood experiences.

PURPOSE

- To further advance the image of young children, educators, and families as fully intelligent citizens with rights to education, resources, respect and democratic participation.

GOALS

- To strengthen open access to professional development through a variety of communication tools, including periodicals such as *Innovations*, newsletters, flyers and web sites.
- To strengthen open access to resources, including research and literature, through a variety of communication tools, including periodicals, newsletters, flyers and web sites.
- To create professional development initiatives in response to particular needs and requests.
- To strengthen professional relationships among members.
- To serve as a conduit for dialogue and exchange with Reggio Children, Italy and other international organizations who promote the rights of young children.
- To consistently recognize and value diversity by encouraging participation of all cultures, class and type of early childhood program.

The NAREA board invites you to participate in this exciting new organization. We look forward to seeing you at this reception and meeting on November 20, 2002 in New York.

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"THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN" EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

February 2 - December 31, 2002
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REGGIO EMILIA STUDY TOUR INFORMATION

Dates for the 2003 U.S. Study Tour to Reggio Emilia have not yet been determined. Reggio Children sets dates for the U.S. study tour as part of their yearly scheduling of study tours from several countries around the world. This year, we should know the dates by mid-September.

Once dates are set, you will find them in the periodical, *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange*, that is published by the Merrill-Palmer Institute (MPI). We will also post registration information on the MPI web site and the Reggio listserv.

In past years, dates were known by the time of the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference in November. The conference is in New York City this year and study tour registration information will be available at the Reggio Children booth at the conference.

Study tour registration information can also be requested via email or by phone. My voice mail message is kept up to date with current information about the next study tour. When you request registration information, it will be sent to you by e-mail or U.S. mail as soon as it becomes available. Spaces for the U.S. study tour to Reggio Emilia are reserved upon receipt of a registration form and deposit. Registrations are accepted in the order they are received. We do not reserve individual spaces before registration materials are available and we do not maintain a mailing list or waiting list from one year to the next.

We welcome and appreciate your interest in joining a study tour to visit the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,
Angela Ferrario
U.S. Liaison for Study tours to Reggio Emilia

NEW RESOURCE from Reggio Children

Theater Curtain: The Ring of Transformations, May 2002, published by Reggio Children, edited by Vea Vecchi.
The story of a project in which the five and six year-old children from the Diana preschool designed and created a new house curtain for the Ariosto Theatre in Reggio Emilia.

CONFERENCE CALENDAR *see www.mpi.wayne.edu for regularly updated conference calendar*

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education. We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621, e-mail: ***reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it***

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations *to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.*

Beyond My Eyes: Presented by Reggio Children in Collaboration with The Workshop
Merida, Yucatan, Mexico •
Presenters: Amelia Gambetti, Lella Gandini & Caty Franco
October 7-9, 2002:
Introduction to Reggio Emilia Approach
October 9-10, 2002:
Advanced Reflections of Reggio Emilia Approach

Contact: Sausan Burshan,
c/o Falco
6800 SW 40th St., Miami, FL 33155
(305) 662-7276, ext. 715

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators
Wayne State University •
Detroit, MI
October 19, 2002:
Jennifer Strange,
"Facilitating and Supporting Conversations With and Among Children"
February 8, 2003: Lella Gandini,
"Observation and Documentation of Children's Relationships, Communication and Learning Through Interpretation of their Experiences with the Hundred Languages"
April 5, 2003:
Sally Roman & Sallie Boyle,
"Reggio-Inspired Approaches to Literacy Development and Curriculum Standards"

Contact: Judith Allen Kaminsky
Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University
(313) 872-1790,
fax (313) 875-0947,
e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu,
web site: www.mpi.wayne.edu

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Delegation Days
The College School, Clayton Schools' Family Center & The St. Michael School • St. Louis, MO •
October 24-26 &
November 7-9, 2002

Contact: Michael Holohan,
St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Coordinator
(314) 324-4940,
e-mail: mpholohan@earthlink.net ,
web site: www.reggiocollab.org/

Chicago Commons Child Development Program Learning Tour
Chicago, IL • November 14-15, 2002

Contact: Kimberly Cothran,
Professional Development Coordinator (773) 826-4872,
fax (773) 826-4174, e-mail:
cothrank@chicagocommons.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children
New York, NY • November 20-23, 2002 • *See program for seminars and sessions inspired by the Reggio educational philosophy by Italian and North American educators*

Contact: NAEYC Registration,
c/o Expo Exchange
(301) 694-5124,
web site: www.naeyc.org

CONFERENCES OF RELATED INTEREST

Canadian Association for Young Children Annual Conference
Concordia University • Montreal, Quebec • October 19, 2002 •
Speakers include George Forman, Carol A. Wein & Alexandra Doherty

Contact: Carol Jonas
e-mail:
carol.jonas@johnabbott.qc.ca

Ohio Department of Education Annual Conference
Greater Columbus Convention Center • Columbus, OH •
November 3-5, 2002 • Featured speakers: Carlina Rinaldi, Jeanne Goldhaber & Ann Bardwell

Contact: Ohio Dept. of Ed.,
Office of Early Childhood Education Information Dissemination
(614) 262-4545,
fax (614) 262-1070

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, contact these organizations:

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
2460 16th St. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202)265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
web site: http://www.cdacouncil.org

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr., Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386,
fax (217) 333-3767
e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu (Bernard Cesarone)
web site: http://ericeece.org/
Reggio Emilia section - http://ericeece.org/reggio.html

INTERNET/LISTSERV
REGGIO-L@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu

To subscribe, send a message to: listserv@postoffice.cso.uiuc.edu. Leave the subject line blank. Just type: **subscribe REGGIO-L YourFirstName YourLastName** in the first line of the message area.

Co-owners: Judith Allen Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute (j_a_kaminsky @wayne.edu) and Bernard Cesarone, ERIC/EECE (cesarone@uiuc.edu). If you have questions about subscribing, contact: Bernard Cesarone at ERIC/ EECE • Voice: (800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386 • e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu

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Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria, 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-05220455416,
fax 39-0522-455621
e-mail: reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it

NEW RESOURCES

Edwards, Carolyn Pope & Raikes, Helen, "Extending the Dance: Relationship-Based Approaches to Infant/Toddler Care and Education," *Young Children*, July 2002.

Rinaldi, Carla, "Research and Learning," *Child Care Information Exchange*, May/June 2002.

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Mural created by the five year-old children at Anna Frank School in Reggio Emilia, Italy.
Courtesy of Reggio Children.

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MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE: ADULTS AS INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP LEARNERS

By Brenda Fyfe with the collaboration of Carlina Rinaldi

WHAT'S INSIDE

A Vermont Experience in Collaborative Professional Development

Book Review of *Making Learning Visible*

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance Formed

Conference Calendar

"The Hundred Languages of Children" Exhibit Schedule

New Resources

PS 031133

Brenda Fyfe is a Professor and Interim Dean of the School of Education, and Director of the Kornblum Institute for Teaching Excellence at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. She made her first visit to Reggio Emilia in 1989 and in 1992, she established and co-directed a professional development project for St. Louis educators to study the Reggio educational philosophy. This project was the origin of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative, a group of three schools that continue in partnership with Webster University. Since 1970, Carlina Rinaldi has served as Pedagogista *and Director of the Municipal Infant-Toddler Centers and Preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy. She is now Executive Consultant to Reggio Children, and a Professor at the University of Modena and Reggio in the faculty of Science in Early Education.*

Introduction

This is a story of individual and group learning through the collaboration of a group of 18 graduate students and their instructors. The context is a graduate course co-taught by Carlina Rinaldi and Brenda Fyfe at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri during the fall semester of 2001. In this article, we will discuss the strategies that we used to support our hypotheses about the development of individual and group learning, the values that consciously guided our actions and reflections with the students, and the documentation processes that were used in our research. We will then reflect on our findings regarding the implications for teacher education.

continued on next page

Building an Effective Learning Group

Carlina had agreed to become Webster University's first "E. Desmond Lee International Visiting Professor." We planned that she would spend the fall semester teaching at Webster University, consulting in the three other schools of the St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative (The College School, The St. Michael School and Clayton School's Family Center), speaking at conferences and lecturing to community groups. We had many projects and possibilities in front of us, but one took priority. It was a graduate course that we had agreed to co-teach, using the book, *Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners* (2001), published by Reggio Children in collaboration with Project Zero/Harvard Graduate School of Education. We wanted to explore this research report with our graduate students, but we also wanted to apply the research questions and methodology to our group of adult learners. We aspired to live the concept of "school as a place of culture." Carlina had written about this in a chapter of *Making Learning Visible*. In this chapter, she described school as "a place where a personal and collective culture is developed that influences the social, political and values context and, in turn, is influenced by this context in a relationship of deep and authentic reciprocity." We wondered if, in a 16-week period, two instructors and 18 graduate students could create such a culture, "where values are explored and made visible, conscious and sharable."

In the months of planning prior to Carlina's arrival, we worked on developing hypotheses for student learning but also questions for our own learning, and our research on adults as individual and group learners. We hypothesized that students would:

- evaluate the roles of adults and children in learning groups,
- develop an in-depth understanding of how documentation of children's learning processes could make learning visible and shape the learning that takes place,
- explore how members of learning groups are engaged in the emotional and aesthetic as well as the intellectual dimensions of learning,
- examine and discuss how the focus of learning in learning groups extends beyond the learning of individuals to create a collective body of knowledge, and
- help us to determine possible implications of the Reggio Children/Project Zero study for early education in U.S. contexts.

We wanted to explore and research how a group of adults could become a learning group. The questions for our research were the same as those that guided the individual and group learning research project documented in the book, *Making Learning Visible*:

- To what extent can a relational group really be a learning group?
- To what extent is individual learning reinforced and enhanced or, on the contrary, stifled and inhibited in a learning group?
- Does group learning actually exist?
- Can a group construct its own way of learning?
- To what extent can documentation foster new ways of learning?
- What is the relationship between documentation and assessment?

Due to a prior obligation for completing her summer teaching for the University of Modena in Italy, Carlina arrived two weeks after the start of Webster's fall semester. We agreed that the first few weeks of class

were critical in terms of building community, so we decided to use Carlina's absence as an opportunity to articulate and document with students the profile of learners in the class. When they arrived at the first class meeting, the students agreed that it made sense for us to carefully document our get-acquainted introductions to share with Carlina via e-mail. I asked the students to brainstorm and then prioritize the most significant and relevant kinds of information that she might want or need. I also suggested that we think about what we needed to know about each other in order to become an effective learning group. After a good bit of discussion, we developed consensus about six essential categories of information. They included work experience, background or questions regarding the concept of documentation, preferred learning style(s), challenges experienced with regard to observation and documentation, something personal, and aspirations for learning in this course. I took notes on my laptop and asked students to do the same. I told the class that I would send a copy of my notes by e-mail to each of them for their comments or corrections before sending the document by e-mail to Carlina.

This simple first step served many purposes for us as a newly formed learning group:

- It allowed us to experience the process and value of documentation.
- It enabled Carlina to learn about the class, to hear their voices and not lose time in getting acquainted.
- It could and would serve as a record to be studied now and throughout our time together, to reflect on ourselves as a relational group.
- It was an experience that asked the adult learners to think about significant information that might support the building of relationships and community.
- It gave identity and subjectivity to each person in the class, supporting the individual voices but within a common frame. This common frame enabled us to look at our potential intersubjectivity.
- It gave us the possibility to read documentation as individual profiles but also to study and understand our profile as a group of learners.
- It gave value to the similarities and differences among us.
- It revealed questions and challenges on the minds of students.

At the first class meeting, I shared a skeleton of the course rather than a detailed syllabus, which included the hypotheses for learning that Carlina and I had developed. We outlined what we anticipated the class would study during the first two weeks prior to Carlina's arrival and I asked the group if they thought these plans made sense or should be changed or modified, especially in light of the varied backgrounds just presented in the self-introductions. Carlina and I wanted our students to know from the onset that they would share responsibility for their own learning and the learning of others in the class. Through the introductions, students had already articulated what they, as individuals, hoped to learn. Now we were negotiating agreement about what we would strive to learn as a group.

One non-negotiable source of our learning would be the book, *Making Learning Visible*, but additional readings could be determined to meet the needs of the group or individuals. We spent time in class sharing opinions about publications that we recommended for each other. Carlina and I had projected and organized for many possible learning experiences but in the spirit of *progettazione*, we wanted to be open to the ideas and proposals of our students. We planned to co-construct and negotiate agreements with students about the development of the course regarding:

- the organization of time together and apart,
- the flow of readings and experiences,
- individual and group learning options,
- choice of focus for documentation studies, and
- the organizational and aesthetic qualities of the learning environment including field trips and enhancements to our classroom at Webster.

Supporting Intersubjectivity

The get-acquainted process and its documentation were the first steps in helping us to communicate and give value to each other's subjectivity. The next step was to move toward the development of intersubjectivity. In an introductory chapter for *Making Learning Visible*, Carlina put forth some of the values that have structured the Reggio experience: "the relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity is fundamental not only on the cognitive (and psychopedagogical) level but, above all, on the political and cultural level. The relationship between the individual and others, between Self and Other, is a key issue for our futures. To choose whether our individual construction is independent from others, or exists with others and through others, means resolving not only the traditional pedagogical-psychological debate, but also the one regarding different images of the human being and humanity." (p. 40)

Perhaps it is our responsibility to document the power of collective reflection and collaborative work among teachers. Perhaps we could use this kind of research to advocate for school systems where teachers are supported and encouraged to work in teams to think together, plan together and study together.

- Brenda Fyfe

We wanted to provoke our students to look at their intersubjectivity as a group of learners. We hypothesized that with careful scaffolding our students could realize the interdependency that is fundamental to group learning and the creation of culture. Carlina and I agreed that, at the second class session, I would present each student with a hard copy of the final draft of documented self-introductions. I asked the students to study the individual profiles to see if we could develop a group profile. It was an exercise to support the development of intersubjectivity but it also brought us into the cycle of documentation, discourse and design (see Forman and Fyfe, 1998). The written *documentation* of our individual profiles gave us a visible platform for a thoughtful discussion or *discourse* about our profile as a group. Through this discussion, we were searching for connections and examining our differences in order to think about what we could learn from each other. We were determining the resources, knowledge and skills that each of us could share. These understandings would contribute to our ability to determine how to proceed in our joint study, our design for learning together through this semester.

The rest of our class time during the weeks prior to Carlina's arrival was spent sharing our understandings of the principles and practices of observation and documentation, and discussing the first few chapters of *Making Learning Visible*. At most classes, we shared responsibility for recording key concepts and ideas expressed in our discussions. Sometimes students would record these on a white board in front of the class. I would take additional notes on my laptop, and later incorporate the group notes and any others that individual students might share with me after class or through e-mail. In the first weeks, these were sent via e-mail to the class for editing and then e-mailed to Carlina. Once Carlina arrived, she suggested that we continue this pattern of weekly documentation for the group. She saw it as a useful archive of our group memory, a reminder of our collective thoughts and insights, and a way to make our group learning process visible and transparent. It also oriented our students to a regular pattern of ongoing communication between classes. Since we were applying the concept of *progettazione*, in which we were open to revision and modification of our plans for learning, it became especially critical that we had a mechanism for keeping track of our learning experiences, agreements and projections.

Documentation as the Driving Force of a Responsive Curriculum

Carlina and I would review the class notes (our documentation) each Tuesday to look for evidence of individual and group learning, to reflect on concepts and ideas expressed, and to revisit and rethink the flow and organization of our class experience. Through this continuous study, we would determine whether and how to proceed with the plans we had anticipated or to modify our plans in response to the learning evidenced in class. We would try to relate our ongoing observations to the hypotheses that we had developed about student learning, and also search for new

insights and understandings that had not been anticipated. Carlina and I were trying to represent for our students the practices developed in the Reggio schools that make documentation the driving force of a responsive curriculum.

From the first class session, students were asked to begin the process of observation and documentation if they had not already been doing this as part of their regular teaching practice. When Carlina arrived, we initiated the idea of forming small groups for the analysis of weekly documentation assignments. The collaborative study of documentation would be critical to group learning, each of us drawing upon multiple perspectives to enrich our understanding of children's learning. We hypothesized that this part of our time together each week would also support the concepts of plurality, possibility, richness, expansion and dialogue that contribute to the creation of culture. By weeks three and four, students were becoming familiar with each other's documentation interests. We were able to negotiate agreements about small groupings on this basis for most, but not all, students. Carlina and I asked a teaching team from The College School, who had much more experience and expertise with regard to observation and documentation, to disperse among the groups. Jennifer Strange and Sally Hovey were taking the course for graduate credit, and Louise Cadwell audited part of the course. They agreed to function as competent peers who could help to support documentation analysis within groups.

Ninety minutes or more were set aside each class for small groups to process documentation. We recommended that each group decide how they would use their time. They could divide time equally to focus on each other's work or they could choose to address only two people's work each week, giving more time to each set of documentation. We warned them of the difficulty of trying to look at everyone's work each evening yet we understood their desires to get weekly feedback on their own work. We explained that if a short period of time was devoted to each person's work, in-depth study of the learning evidenced in the material might be impossible. We also explained that a rushed schedule might undermine their ability to apply the "pedagogy of listening" that Carlina had described in *Making Learning Visible*. The pedagogy of listening requires a sensitivity to the patterns that connect; an openness to be fully present in the moment with children or adults who are communicating with us; and time to question our certainties, to wonder and formulate questions about the observations in front of us. We worried that students might be so preoccupied with presenting their own work each week, they might not be able to listen well to each other. Such listening requires an understanding and belief that we can learn from each other, that each of us will grow in our understandings of learning processes and responsive teaching through collaborative study of documentation. Indeed, this turned out to be a problem for members of some groups.

In the first few weeks of small group study, we would take time afterwards to reflect with the whole group on the organizational strategies that enabled them to function efficiently (e.g., bringing copies of transcripts that were to be studied, adding notes to photos to explain the intent of the documenter for taking the photo, making arrangements for the use of equipment to show documentation - video players, slide projectors, etc.). We discussed the value of this type of preparation and organization when studying documentation in the school setting. We asked students to assess the methods and tools of documentation that were shared. We probed the rationale for choosing certain tools of documentation and methods of observation. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of documentation for particular studies.

Finding Strategies that Support our Values

Through our work with the students in this course, Carlina and I found strategies that were effective in supporting student participation; shared responsibility for individual and group learning; respect and appreciation for the differences among us; wholeness, integrity and continuity of learning; and the aesthetic qualities of our experiences and the knowledge-building process.

- We asked students to respond to reading assignments via e-mail between classes, sending their comments to the entire list of students; then we asked them to respond to each other's reflections on the readings via e-mail. This was done within the whole group and, at times, within the study groups.
- We encouraged members of study groups to communicate with each other outside of class time (e-mail, phone, face-to-face meetings).
- We offered students a map, a short synthesis each week of what we had discussed and explored the week before. It was intended to help us in searching for meaning and creating continuity between one class and the next.
- Carlina and I consulted with each student about her documentation study within the small group context rather than in private conferences. This was done to reinforce the message that members of study groups were responsible for each other's learning and could learn from the study of each other's work.
- We agreed to take field trips to The College School to study environments that support observation and documentation.
- We collaborated with students to enhance our classroom environment with scent, soft music, food and drink, reorganization of tables and seating arrangements.
- Students were asked to develop individual process folios that would make their own learning visible. These might include class notes, initial proposals for their documentation studies with instructor comments written in the columns, notes from weekly documentation study groups, raw data from observations (transcripts, photos, anecdotal notes, children's work, journals, etc.), early drafts of data analyses, drafts of panels or plans for presentation of documentation to parents or colleagues, copies of e-mail exchanges, etc.
- Final presentations were planned with the help of small group members. Students agreed to participate as discussants for members of their own group, supporting each other during presentations.
- We offered ongoing support and provocation for students to accept and give constructive criticism, to learn what we called, "confrontational courage."
- We spent one evening at "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit to examine documentation from Reggio Emilia.
- We documented some learning experiences of small and large groups using video and digital photography.
- The College School team collaborated with us to:
  - demonstrate video analysis of everyday moments of learning in the classroom, looking and looking again (e.g., we viewed a video clip, discussed what we saw, questioned and speculated, then viewed it again and repeated the process to learn more, and draw implications for teaching and learning),
  - discuss the technique of videography - letting the camera dance with the eye, yet follow an intentional pattern of observational focus,
  - look at a "declaration of intents," the research foci of teachers for a given year or semester,
  - examine organizational schemes for orchestrating the collaborative work of a team who observes and documents on a daily basis, and
  - explore multiple forms of documentation (interviews, anecdotal records, photos, transcribed conversations of small groups and large groups, video, children's work using the "hundred languages."
- Frequent self-assessments and a final written assignment to reflect on the relevance of the propositions about group learning presented in *Making Learning Visible* to the experience of group learning within this course.

The relationship between the individual and others, between Self and Other, is a key issue for our futures. To choose whether our individual construction is independent from others, or exists with others and through others, means resolving not only the traditional pedagogical-psychological debate, but also the one regarding different images of the human being and humanity.

- Carlina Rinaldi

Implications for Teacher Education

This article presents the beginning of our case study on individual and group learning of adult students. It delineates the structure and learning strategies that were designed, evolved, co-constructed and negotiated. We attempted to communicate how many of the values, principles and practices developed in Reggio Emilia for early childhood education were applied with a group of adult learners in the U.S. We presented the design for this course with some discussion of the methods and tools of documentation that were used to make learning visible. We believe there is tremendous potential for the use of the book *Making Learning Visible* as a tool for teacher education and professional development. There are a number of questions that can help us to consider the implications for teacher education:

- How might we engage teachers in studying and attempting to validate the propositions about form, function and understandings in learning groups?
- How do we define and value collaborative action research as part of everyday practice?
- How do we value aesthetics in education (higher education as well as early childhood education)?
- What are our understandings and values about subjectivity and intersubjectivity with regard to children, teachers and parents?
- How can adults be supported as individual and group learners in school and university settings?
- What is the relationship between documentation and assessment?

Carlina and I have considered these and other questions that emerge as we reflect on the research reported in *Making Learning Visible* and the experiences we have had over the past year in studying this new research report with teachers. We have discussed implications and extensions of our own work along with possible implications for early childhood teacher education in a broader sense.

As we look back at the seven propositions about group learning written by Mara Krechevsky, one stands out for us. Proposition III (p. 247, *Making Learning Visible*) states "When exploring ideas together, learning groups follow a set of rules - some tacit, some explicit." The chapters on "Documenting the Documenter," "Conversation with a Group of Teachers," and "School as a Place of Group Learning for Parents" make the rules, challenges and struggles of adult learning groups more explicit than any previous publications from Reggio Children. These chapters can be used to help in-service or preservice teachers to examine the form, function and understandings that are critical for collaborative learning at the adult level.

Carlina and I believed that it was critical for our graduate students to not only read about and discuss group learning, but also to experience and struggle through the process of group learning. At the end of our class, students were asked to reflect on and write about the relevance of the propositions to the experiences of group learning within our course. These papers revealed much deeper personal meaning and insights than any of the earlier class discussions about the readings. We surmise that the book offers a powerful stimulus and new insights about the collaborative work of teachers, especially if paired with structured experiences that challenge teachers to think together about documentation.

Carlina and I have already described a number of ways in which we tried to support individual and group learning of our graduate students. But we wondered how and if a one-semester course may have contributed to a lasting desire, a disposition to value group learning as well as individual learning. We wondered how and if our efforts to value and support subjectivity and intersubjectivity with these students in the fall of 2001 might have affected their values and subsequent actions with children and adults. We wrote a letter to everyone from the class at the end of the course, encouraging them to continue to seek collaborative relationships with colleagues from their small groups and with colleagues from their own school systems. We encouraged them to make documentation part of their daily work with children, teachers and parents, and offered particular suggestions with regard to how this could be done within the context and support of future graduate classes at Webster University. We reminded them of resources, such as *Innovations in Early Education: The International Reggio Exchange*, that could help them keep abreast of

Perhaps it is our responsibility to document the power of collective reflection and collaborative work among teachers.

professional development opportunities and grow in their understanding of the principles and practices involved in "making learning visible." But now, a year later, we have decided that it is not enough to encourage and hope for our students' future growth. We plan to conduct a follow-up study to attempt to answer our questions; to demonstrate to our students a long-term commitment to their learning; to try to sort out what factors may have contributed to or presented barriers to their efforts to apply the principles and practices explored in our course; to learn what they are learning about children as individual and group learners; and to understand their perspectives on how and if their experience in our course related to the larger context of their graduate studies or in-service professional development plans.

An extensive review of recent research on constructivist teacher education programs was reported by Julie Rainer Dangel at the 2002 Annual Conference of the Association for Constructivist Teaching. She and her colleague, Edith Guyton, identified eight common elements of these programs:

- reflection
- learner-centered instruction
- collaborative learning
- posing relevant problems/problem solving
- cohort groups
- extended field experiences
- authentic assessment/professional portfolios
- action research

The Rainer and Guyton study also identifies key mediational experiences of effective constructivist preservice and in-service teacher education programs. These include:

- social interaction
- meaningful learning experiences
- shared ownership
- reflection
- developing a personal theory of teaching and learning
- supportive environment

It would seem that all of these elements and mediational experiences are consistent with the principles and practices of the Reggio Emilia approach to the education of children and adults. So what elements and mediational experiences distinguish the professional development of teachers in Reggio Emilia? Perhaps it is the emphasis on documentation as a driving force of a responsive curriculum. This is a concept that can apply to the curriculum of teacher education as well as curriculum for children. We speculate that documentation of adult learning processes makes learning visible and also shapes the learning that takes place. We found that the documentation of our class discussions, which was e-mailed to students between classes and/or referenced at the beginning of the next class, supported continuity in the curriculum and deeper levels of discussion in subsequent classes. At times, Carlina and I selectively documented those portions of class discussions that we thought most promising for posing new problems and questions for investigation.

Another distinguishing feature of the Reggio work, we believe, is its emphasis on group learning. Although collaborative learning and cohort groups may be characteristic features of many constructivist teacher education programs, we can think of few, if any, examples where the learning and thinking of the group is documented, researched or assessed. Evaluation and performance outcomes of preservice or in-service teachers typically focus on the individual. Teachers may be evaluated with regard to work produced in collaborative learning projects, but we question whether the collaborative processes of group learning are documented and assessed by students themselves or by teacher educators. Perhaps it is our responsibility to document the power of collective reflection and collaborative work among teachers. Perhaps we could use this kind of research to advocate for school systems where teachers are supported and encouraged to work in teams to think together, plan together and study together.

Carlina and I found that co-teaching has many advantages and many challenges. It was probably the challenges that supported our own professional growth. Although we shared many beliefs, understandings and values about teaching and learning, it was necessary every step of the way for us to probe each other's thinking, to dialogue and debate

and, finally, to negotiate agreements about every aspect of our teaching and study of adult learning. This required a good deal of time, energy and willingness to persevere in our attempts to fully understand each other and to coordinate different points of view. At times, we shared with the students our different perspectives on an interpretation of documentation or a teaching decision. We felt it important to make our collaboration, negotiation and difference transparent. We wanted to share how much we honored the power of each other's initial perspective for negotiating a better understanding of the subject at hand. We recommend the process of co-teaching and encourage other educators to work to make it a possibility in their own contexts.

We know that many teacher educators have created, transformed and revised teacher education programs and strategies as a result of their study of the Reggio approach. We also know that the publication of the collaborative research project by Reggio Children and Project Zero, *Making Learning Visible*, has stirred new many new questions and implications for early childhood teacher education. We look forward to continuing discourse and new designs for teacher education and research that it inspires. In her final chapter of *Making Learning Visible*, Carlina reflected that the authors "compiled a sort of 'dictionary of experiences,' which helped (them) to reflect, infer, hypothesize and understand" (p. 343). Carlina and I hope that this chapter of our story and study offers another sort of "dictionary of experiences" that might provoke readers to notice, wonder and speculate about the elements of design and documentation that support individual and group learning in the university setting.

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how much we honored
the power of
each other's initial perspective
for
negotiating a better understanding
of the subject at hand.

- Brenda Fyfe

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81

BOOK REVIEW OF

MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE: CHILDREN AS INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP LEARNERS

by Brenda Fyfe

Professor, School of Education, Webster University

Making Learning Visible: Children as Individual and Group Learners is an exciting new publication born out of a collaborative research project conducted by educators from Reggio Emilia and a team from Harvard's Project Zero. It offers the reader a refreshingly visual as well as verbal report of research that truly makes the learning of children and adults visible. The collaboration between the Italians and Americans is clearly based on the pedagogy of listening and the value of difference. Although the Italian and American authors communicate in very different styles, a thorough reading of the book makes it apparent that all of their work together was based on deep and extensive dialogue. As always, the chapters written by the Italian educators retain their aesthetic qualities through visual essays and a beautiful prose style of writing that is rich in metaphor and strong in philosophy. The chapters written by the Americans are clear, insightful, analytical and rich in citations of literature that help to connect, relate and contrast the Reggio work to theory, research and practice familiar to us in America.

In an early chapter, Carlina Rinaldi articulates the values that underlie the work in Reggio Emilia. Throughout the rest of the book, these values come to life through documentation studies, interviews with teachers and the reflections by the Project Zero educators who studied their work. Several chapters present documentation of children's learning processes using photographs, quotes from children as well as descriptive and interpretive comments by the educators.

Unlike "The Hundred Languages of Children" exhibit and many other Reggio Children publications, this document takes us deep inside the minds of educators, the roles of teachers, the thinking of teaching teams and the systems of support that enable them to collaborate with children, parents and community.

I had the extraordinary opportunity not only to be one of the first to gain access to this book upon its release last September, but also to use it as the focal point of a graduate course that I co-taught with Carlina Rinaldi. Carlina was a visiting professor at Webster University for the fall 2001 semester. She coordinated the *Making Learning Visible* research team from Reggio Emilia along with Howard Gardner and colleagues from Project Zero. At the end of the semester, Carlina and I asked our students to share their perspectives on the book. Their comments are incorporated throughout the rest of this review.

"From the minute that you flip through it, you know that you are not looking at some 'same old book' on research." This response from a graduate student is typical of many students' appreciation for the visual orientation given by the table of contents, the photo series of "mini-stories" that are woven through the book, and the insights and examples offered with regard to the visual presentation and analysis of documentation.

My students and I valued the fact that the chapters offer multiple perspectives yet combine to form a cohesive whole. Twelve Reggio educators authored chapters, including *pedagogisti, atelieristi* and teachers, but many more are identified and quoted within the research data presented. Four Americans from the Project Zero team authored chapters, but the acknowledgements indicate a much larger group of colleagues offered insights on early research reports. The data reported also makes visible the perspectives of parents and children through their words and images of their work and interactions. As one student said, "I think it's striking how you can tell different perspectives of researchers throughout the book, who is writing and presenting the material, whether it's a teacher from Reggio Emilia or somebody who is listening to the teachers having a conversation. It's wonderful to move around in those different perspectives and see this understanding from lots of different points of view."

Many of our grad students resonated especially with the chapter by Amelia Gambetti, "A Conversation with a Group of Teachers." In it, Gambetti interviews a group of teachers who have been working at a school for many years and teachers who have only recently started their experience there. The purpose was to analyze the problem areas that were emerging from the daily practice of the new teachers. Many of my students felt that this chapter helped them to see that teachers in Reggio struggle with some of the same questions that they have. But more than a feeling of solidarity or relief, the chapter offered them insights about the level of open dialogue and, often, heated debate that is necessary to grow professionally and work collaboratively.

Our students struggled to make sense of the concepts articulated by Carlina Rinaldi in the chapter, "Infant-toddler Centers and Preschools as Places of Culture." But as we proceeded through the study of the book, we could see how these values are both communicated and constructed with children and families. The book is filled with examples that illustrate enacted values. Students found it an extremely challenging book, "not an easy read," as they said. At the same time, student after student commented on its usefulness, saying they found themselves reading and re-reading some of the chapters. Several stated that they found it an invaluable tool and a resource as they worked on their own documentation studies. The chapter on the form, function and understanding in learning groups offers a synthesis of the research that teachers found very useful. A number of the teachers in the class talked of sharing this information with parents and colleagues. As a group of graduate school learners, the students felt the propositions also applied to themselves in many ways.

The final chapters written by the Project Zero team (Steve Seidel, Mara Krechevsky and Ben Mardell) offer excellent analyses of some of the "cultural knots," false dichotomies, and different worldviews that often get in the way of our study and understanding of the Reggio approach. They are able to articulate the complexities and subtleties of the Reggio approach that often confound or are misconstrued by American educators. I think many readers will more fully understand the Reggio experience through their understanding.

This research, like all good research, raises many questions and directions for continued study. This investigation and its findings about children as individual and group learners offer us a challenge to continue the research in our own settings. It provokes us to rethink our definitions of research, the roles of teachers, children and parents as researchers, and the relationship between teachers and researchers from outside the school system. It asks us to examine how documentation is related to assessment, how documentation affects learning, and how we value and support the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of learning, to name a few.

My particular experience in reading and studying this book has, indeed, been a social one. Although I'm sure the richness of the book will come through to the individual, isolated reader, I highly recommend that it be used as a tool for group discussion and debate. I think the processes of group learning are made visible for the individual reader. But my own experience suggests that group processing of the book can lead to a deeper understanding of the collaborative nature of this kind of research and can offer the reader a personal basis for relating to the concepts revealed about individual and group learning.

A VERMONT EXPERIENCE IN COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Jeanne Goldhaber

Jeanne Goldhaber is an Associate Professor in the Early Childhood PreK-3 Teacher Education Program at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont. In the past 10 years, Jeanne has participated in nearly as many study tours to the Reggio Emilia municipal early childhood program, including three study tours organized for community leaders and policy makers. E-mail messages in this article have been edited for clarity.

The Setting

Vermont is a small state (about 613,000 people in 9600 square miles) tucked in the corner of the northeast, surrounded by New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York and Canada. Yet despite its size and location, Vermont conjures up multiple images for many Americans. For some, Vermont is a metaphor for the quaint New England village, its profile punctuated by white church spires and nestled under mountains that, depending on the season, may boast white-capped peaks or orange, red and yellow flames of color. Outdoor enthusiasts look to Vermont for its clean lakes, protected forests and snow-covered slopes. For those who are politically minded, Vermont's annual town meetings are seen as one of the purest forms of the democratic process, while its state laws regarding civil unions and school funding can be viewed as evidence of a strong commitment to issues of equity and justice.

The reality of living in Vermont reflects much of what its image suggests, yet many of the challenges of contemporary society exist. For example, the quaintness of our villages often masks the hardships of rural life and the intrusion of 21st century problems including drug use and domestic violence. Vermont's natural resources are the subject of continuous and, often, heated debate as elected local and state officials face the challenge of promoting economic progress and development for Vermont citizens, while protecting Vermont's natural environment. And while Vermont's strong commitment to individual freedom and choice is laudatory, it also explains, in part, why it was one of the last states to require local school districts to offer kindergarten.

Clearly Vermont is like every other state in its complex mix of opportunity and challenge. Its size and political history, the demands of its climate and terrain and, perhaps, its somewhat isolated location have contributed to a culture that values its citizens as both self-sufficient individuals *and* contributing members of their communities. Not surprisingly, it is a culture that relies heavily on individual effort while recognizing the pivotal role of personal relationships in affecting change.

Within this context, a group of Vermonters has been working together to build a shared vision of early education and care inspired by the accomplishments of the municipal system of infant-toddler programs and preschools in Reggio Emilia. We call ourselves the "Reggio Inspired Vermont Early Childhood Team" (RIVET). What follows is a description of RIVET's

sometimes tentative, sometimes bold efforts to develop a statewide learning community and advocacy project through an emerging shared investigation.

The Development of a Strategic Plan

RIVET was coined during a meeting held by Vermont educators who were participating in the 2001 U.S. Spring Study Tour to Reggio Emilia. Members of the Vermont delegation met several times over the course of the week-long tour to reflect on our experience and to discuss how we could bring these experiences home to Vermont's system of early education and care. We began work on developing a set of statewide goals, with a plan to organize a meeting in Vermont in July to continue our work.

The follow-up meeting was billed as a reunion for Vermonters who were interested in exploring how the system of early education and care in Reggio Emilia could inform Vermont's early childhood professional community and programs for young children. Those of us who agreed to organize the reunion wanted it to be held in a location that reflected the incredible beauty of our Vermont landscape. We learned of a former summer camp that was being used for state sponsored retreats. It was an idyllic spot to carry out the hard work of refining the goals and strategies identified by the May 2001 delegation. Because of Vermont's size, most who attended either knew, or knew of, each other so little time was spent on introductions. The day's work produced the development of a strategic plan that targeted the following areas for action:

- Professional Development and Support
- Values Enhancement, Community Engagement and Advocacy
- Children with Special Rights
- Sensational Spaces for Children
- Parental Participation (later integrated into each area listed above)

Each of the targeted areas was elaborated by a statement of purpose and included a set of goals with accompanying strategies/plans, a timeline and responsible agents. The day ended with a well-defined course of action and a celebratory feast. Now we just had to implement our plan.

Framing a Shared Question

The University of Vermont's Early Childhood PreK-3 Teacher Education Program and the Campus Children's Center interpreted the strategic plan as a call to action. We proposed the development of a two-year project to address the areas of professional development and support, and values enhancement, community engagement and advocacy outlined in the plan. We envisioned this experience as creating a network of Reggio-inspired early childhood educators who would, in turn, share their experience and knowledge with their colleagues in their respective regions. At the same time, we hoped to share the work that came out of this project in public venues as a form of advocacy for children, families and the professional community at the local and state level.

On December 8, 2001, we held our first Saturday morning RIVET meeting of approximately 35 early childhood educators from across the state, some driving for a total of three hours. The Campus Children's Center shared an investigation that we had been following, related to the children's understanding of the UVM campus community and the natural world, an investigation that had been inspired, in part, by the project described in *Reggio Tutta* (2000). We discussed the cycle of inquiry (Gandini & Goldhaber, 2001) and proposed the following questions to frame a collaborative statewide investigation of children's understanding of and relationships to their Vermont communities and the natural world:

- We have the wish and the desire to know how children understand, perceive, live and interact with their communities and the natural world. Because we see children as protagonists of their own and others' experience, we are also interested in learning about the role children play as contributing members of their communities and stewards of the natural world.
- We value children's experiences by listening closely to the meaning they give to their world . . . to the people, places, smell, movements and sounds they experience in planned and chance encounters. We hope to make visible their process of constructing meaning.

The challenge of offering opportunities to the children in our respective programs based on our on-going, co-constructed analysis of their experiences will continue to be a significant thrust of our work together.
- Jeanne Goldhaber

Since then, we have come together to revisit these questions every six to eight weeks, taking a recess over the summer and reconvening this fall. At each meeting, teachers shared observations, artifacts, photographs and videotapes. We are learning a great deal. For example, one teacher shared photographs of a small group of toddlers exploring a nearby brook, images that conveyed their rapt attention as they threw rocks into the water and worked together to pull out clumps of thick long grass to throw into the brook. She also shared observations of the children's interactions, exchanges that were free of conflict, fluid and joyful. Her observations resonated with others in the group. Stories of children's encounters with the natural world and with each other under the protection of a thicket of white pines or on the fringe of a muddy puddle supported her emerging theory about the uniqueness of the natural world as a relational yet provocative context.

Support from Technology

Of course, we never have enough time, and are increasingly aware of the fact that our colleagues from southern Vermont find it difficult, and in the winter, impossible to attend our meetings. We set up a RIVET Listserv (one of the strategic plan's strategies to support professional development) to continue our Saturday morning conversations and make them accessible to those who could not attend. While we were using it to share minutes from the meetings and to make announcements about up-coming events, we were unsuccessful in our attempts to make it a vehicle for sharing reflections, and co-constructing analyses and projections.

At the following Saturday meeting, one of our braver RIVET members told the group that she was disheartened by the lack of response to a posting that she had put on the List the week before. She hurried to

86

clarify that she didn't mean to hurl accusations, since she too has not responded to others' postings over the past year, and admitted feeling stymied by how to use the Listserv more effectively. Many in the group reported similar feelings and described how risky it felt to send out a RIVET e-mail with their most tentative thoughts and uncertain theories, and how discouraging it was to get only a few replies. We wondered whether the List might be working against us, since in receiving no or very few responses to our e-mails, we may feel even more isolated!

We agreed to try a new tactic. We acknowledged that there's never enough time to fully discuss the observations and artifacts that are presented Saturday mornings, and asked those who shared experiences at the meetings to post them on the List for continued discussion. Those attending the meeting committed ourselves to respond to them. We agreed that each of us would try to respond to at least one and as many as three postings during the interval between this meeting and the next. We hoped that making this face-to-face commitment to each other would strengthen our resolve.

Threads Emerge

Over the course of the six weeks before the next Saturday morning session, the List hummed, primarily with two threads of conversation. One e-mail exchange was a continuation of a discussion from the previous Saturday morning meeting about a small group of preschoolers in a rural Vermont community who ride on a big yellow school bus to their preschool, located in a K-12 public school of 400 students. The opening e-mail reads:

"The school staff and the preschool teachers try very hard to help children feel safe and nurtured but the whole experience of coming into a new setting with all these bigger children can be overwhelming for a four year old. Often the children talk about who will be their driver on the way home and who will be their driver tomorrow. They ask about who will sit with them and they are often concerned when there is a change in the routine. In this way, they question their place in this new school community and seek out people to trust with whom they feel safe. My question is about finding these caring people and fostering these connections for children."

This teacher goes on to report that since the Saturday morning RIVET meeting, she and her co-teachers have invited several bus drivers to their classroom for snack and have learned that the bus drivers know many of the children's families. They've also invited the children's bus buddies (children from the upper grades who sit with the children on the bus). She wonders, "Any ideas about where to go next?"

The replies are varied. One RIVET member wrote, "I am imagining the view out the window . . . the slices of red, green, yellow, brown, blue, gray that color the ride . . . the black and white of winter, the view from just below the bottom of the window . . . the houses of neighbors, community landmarks, birds, trees and mountains. While it's true that bus transportation gets children to school, it supplants the daily connection between parent and school. There is no mother or father to build a bridge for the day with the teacher and the classroom . . . no daily connection between peers, parents and the stories that are unfolding in the context of school. There are, however, the bumps you hit on those dirt roads, in the absence of shocks, and how you bounce around . . . the cavernous acoustics and the sounds that echo around the belly of the bus. There are children covertly eating from their lunches and exchanging treasures from back packs."

She recounted her past experiences as a primary level teacher in a rural public school when she would occasionally ride the bus with the children: "School is where we came to be together but it was important to remember that some of our children spent as much as two hours a day on the bus, traveling from a diversity of home environments. Their experiences on the bus offered us many different perspectives about this part of their daily life, the relationships that developed, the 'language' of the bus, the rhythm and all it offers." She ends her e-mail with the recommendation, "If I were you, I'd grab my camera, pencil and pad, and jump on the bus with the children."

Another RIVET member shared his dissertation research, in which he found that even preschoolers whose school districts didn't provide transportation (and whose siblings walked to school) included buses in their drawings about what to expect when they went to kindergarten. He described the school bus as an icon, "as a part of school, every bit as much as learning to read and write - not just a means to get to school."

The other thread of conversation discussed on the List integrated children's creativity and the natural world. It started with a provocative e-mail in which a RIVET member developed her thoughts about the "natural environment of creativity." She wrote: "The creative environment is a growing one that flows with the rhythm of the children. Real life issues are addressed and, although themes of play are not always pleasurable, there is satisfaction in their exploration. The creative environment exercises the multiple intelligences. Understandings are ruminated kinesthetically, visually, emotionally, musically."

Another RIVET member replied by sharing her personal history in terms of the concept of creativity, "To me, creativity represents the integration of deeply knowing about materials or media, and being able to relate that knowledge with our experiences in life, to understand how one can support the other in knowing or perceiving something in new or more expanded ways. Creativity is related to the surprises and the satisfaction of discovering or playing with ideas."

She also theorizes that nature may be an "endless environment of materials which can support the play between objects and ideas, possibly giving rise to what we think of as creativity . . . an environment that informs us about the environments in which children thrive. Watching children in natural environments helps me to know more deeply about the importance of open-ended materials, allowing adequate time and ample space. It has helped solidify my understanding of children's desires to be connected with each other, their deep desire to explore the unknown. Our challenge, then, may be to find ways to offer settings that expand and support these interests in the classroom."

At the next RIVET meeting, we asked for an update of the bus story, and learned that the special snack times that the teachers and children planned for the bus drivers and bus buddies had taken on a life of their own! It seems that the bus drivers who hadn't been invited were asking when it would be their turn! We wanted to learn more about the children's experiences on the bus, so we tried to figure out practical ways to document the bus ride. We suggested that disposable cameras be given to the bus buddies so that they can help the preschoolers when they want to take a photograph of landmarks or people along their route. But we were brought back to the reality - and scale - of childhood when reminded that some children may not be able to see outside their window! We gave our RIVET colleague the assignment to find out what is visible from the perspective of her preschoolers on the bus and to report back to us on the List.

We revisited the idea of mapping the bus route with the children, an idea that had already been discussed on the List. A teacher from a different program shared samples of maps that her children were drawing, which chart the routes to their friends' houses. One included a detailed drawing of the village store, complete with double swinging screen doors, a dispenser to get napkins to "wipe the ice cream off your lips" and her mom, who worked there many years ago. We are excited by the meaning of children's maps and explored the possibility that, through their maps, children are representing their widening world of relationships and community membership, family stories and daily rituals that become significant memories.

We didn't have enough time at this meeting to pursue the List conversation about children's experiences in the natural world. I suggested that we read a chapter from *Children and Nature* (Kahn & Kellert, 2002) to further our conversation and perhaps to inform our investigation of children's relationships to the natural world. I invited everyone to share their responses to the chapter on the List over the next six weeks and am eager to hear their reactions.

Looking Forward

We still have a great deal to do. We must try to maintain our momentum. Ironically, attendance was lowest at the Saturday morning RIVET meeting that followed the most robust List activity! How do we overcome the barriers of distance, geography and climate to include *all* interested Vermont early childhood educators? We have plans to develop additional strategies to meet these challenges such as a web page that would include a chat room. We have just learned that we may be able to take advantage of a new free, interactive learning network that links Vermont's 55 high schools. We are hopeful yet anxious about staying connected and productive.

We must also begin to organize and analyze the documentation of the children's work that we are collecting. For example, we may decide to collect photographic images of the children's encounters with each other in the natural world and organize them by

habitat, to learn more about how direct contact with the natural world influences human connectedness. Or we may decide to study the words children use to describe their encounters with the natural world and organize them by gender, to pursue the question of whether boys and girls experience the natural world differently.

The challenge of offering opportunities to the children in our respective programs based on our on-going, co-constructed analysis of their experiences will continue to be a significant thrust of our work together. For example, if we *were* to find that our preschool-aged boys and girls appear to experience the natural world differently, to ask different questions and to see themselves as having different relationships with the natural world, what experiences would we plan (indoors as well as outdoors) that would invite them to revisit, represent, share and negotiate their particular points of view?

Ultimately, we hope to organize our documentation and develop a small traveling exhibit that celebrates and interprets young children's understanding of and relationships to their Vermont communities and the natural world. We see this exhibit traveling around the state as a potentially powerful form of advocacy as well as what we hope Loris Malaguzzi [founder of the Reggio municipal early childhood program] would consider a worthy "destination."

Looking Back

Our adventure is only just beginning. It is an adventure defined by our particular circumstances and supported by a network of relationships. We think we have invented some strategies that have been effective for us. For example, the development of the strategic plan was a productive and community building process, and it continues to be a helpful document. It clarifies our vision and, in doing so, allows us to revisit it, to measure our progress and to hold ourselves accountable. It also appears that having a shared question provides common ground for us to build on and learn from each other's experiences. We may also be learning how to develop strategies so that we can use our Listserv and perhaps other communication tools to promote meaningful exchanges and reflection.

Our challenges remain daunting: making time, overcoming distance and, I believe most significantly, maintaining the will to keep reinventing ourselves so we can accomplish our vision. Perhaps in years to come, Vermont will not only be a metaphor for quaint villages and snow-capped mountains, but also a symbol for communities that cherish their youngest citizens.

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NEW RESOURCES from Reggio Children!

Along the Levee Road, *2002, published by* Reggio Children.
The history and particular identity of the municipal preschool "Centro Verde Martiri de Villa Sesso" narrated by the protagonists. It recounts the history of an educational community from 1945 to 1997.

Not Just Anyplace, *2002, VHS video, produced by* Reggio Children.
The first video entirely dedicated to the almost century-long history of the municipal infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. Also includes interviews with administrators, politicians, pedagogisti, teachers, atelieristi.

Theater Curtain: The Ring of Transformations, *May 2002, published by* Reggio Children, *edited by Vea Vecchi.*
The story of a project in which the five and six year-old children from the Diana preschool designed and created a new house curtain for the Ariosto Theatre in Reggio Emilia.

The Future is Tomorrow and I Can Only Image It . . . I Think It's . . . a Lovely Day, *2002, published by* Reggio Children.
From a project carried out in the Fiastri and Rodari Municipal Preschools of Sant'Ilario d'"Enza (Province of Reggio Emilia), a book that collects thoughts and predictions on the future by 5 and 6 year-old children.

North American Reggio Emilia Alliance Formed

On Wednesday, November 20, 2002 during the NAEYC annual conference in New York, the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) guiding board hosted a meeting at the Hilton New York Hotel. The focus of the meeting was the emerging identity, history, current status, the new NAREA web site and opportunties for membership. The meeting included representation by Reggio Children, and introduction of board members and the executive committee of NAREA.

IDENTITY

The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance is a network of educators, parents and advocates seeking to elevate both the quality of life and the quality of schools and centers for young children.

MISSION

- To promote and defend the rights of children, educators and families, of all cultures and class, to exemplary early childhood experiences.

PURPOSE

- To further advance the image of young children, educators, and families as fully intelligent citizens with rights to education, resources, respect and democratic participation.

GOALS

- To strengthen open access to professional development through a variety of communication tools, including periodicals such as *Innovations*, newsletters, flyers and web sites.
- To strengthen open access to resources, including research and literature, through a variety of communication tools, including periodicals, newsletters, flyers and web sites.
- To create professional development initiatives in response to particular needs and requests.
- To strengthen professional relationships among members.
- To serve as a conduit for dialogue and exchange with Reggio Children, Italy and other international organizations who promote the rights of young children.
- To consistently recognize and value diversity by encouraging participation of all cultures, class and type of early childhood program.

The NAREA board invites you to become a member of this exciting new organization. For information about membership, contact Vicki Jacobs, e-mail: vlj6769@aol.com or log onto the NAREA web site: www.reggioalliance.org

CONTACTS FOR REGGIO CHILDREN

Reggio Children USA Office for Publications
(Carol Brunson Day)
c/o Council for Professional Recognition
2460 16th. St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202) 265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
web site: www.cdacouncil.org

Angela Ferrario
Liaison in the U.S. for study tours to Reggio Emilia
(508) 473-8001, e-mail: aferrario@worldbank.org

Amelia Gambetti
Reggio Children Coordinator and Liaison for consultancy in schools
c/o Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-0522-455416, fax 39-0522-455621
e-mail: reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it

Lella Gandini
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American Academy in Rome
Via Angelo Masina, 5, 00153 Roma, Italy
39-06-58310928, fax 39-06-5810788
(at Academy)
e-mail: l.gandini@aarome.org
(**temporary address for five years, beginning on August 20, 1998**)

"THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN" EXHIBIT SCHEDULE

February 2 - December 31, 2002
COSI, 333 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH
Contact: COSI • (614) 228-COSI •
web site: www.cosi.org

February 3, 2003 - mid-December, 2003
The Center for Leadership in Education,
201 Burns Rd., Elyria, OH
Contact: Denise Shelton • (440) 366-4880 •
e-mail: dshelton@centernet.org

RESOURCES PUBLISHED BY REGGIO CHILDREN

Available from:
Reggio Children USA
2460 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202) 265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
e-mail: vivienneo@cdacouncil.org,
web site: www.cdacouncil.org

Child Care Information Exchange
P.O. Box 3249, Redmond, WA 98073-3249
(800) 221-2864, web site:
www.childcareexchange.com

Learning Materials Workshop
(800) 693-7164, e-mail:
mail@learningmaterialswork.com,
web site:
www.learningmaterialswork.com/shop/reggio.html

The Olive Press
5727 Dunmore Dr., W. Bloomfield, MI 48322-1613
e-mail: theolivepress@yahoo.com
website: http//www.olivepressbooks.com

REGGIO EMILIA STUDY TOUR INFORMATION

Dates for the next U.S. study tour to Reggio Emilia, Italy are March 1 to 8, 2003, with departure from the U.S. on February 28, 2003. Participation is limited to 150 people. There is no selection process for participation. Spaces are reserved in the order registrations/deposits are received. It is expected that those who register will have some knowledge about the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia and will have read some of the many books and articles that are now available.

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, connect with the following web sites:

Merrill Palmer Institute
http://www.mpi.wayne.edu

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
Reggio Emilia section:
http://ericeece.org/reggio.html

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
http://www.cdacouncil.org

Please call me if you have any questions. I am now based in Massachusetts and working part time at the World Bank Children's Center in Washington, DC.

best regards,

Angela Ferrario
U.S. Liaison for Study Tours to Reggio Emilia
phone: 508-473-8001
email: aferrario@worldbank.org

CONFERENCE CALENDAR *see www.mpi.wayne.edu for regularly updated conference calendar*

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF REGGIO CHILDREN, s.r.l.

The office of Reggio Children, s.r.l., is pleased that there is so much interest in the United States about our infant centers, preprimary schools and educational philosophy. We note with pride the number of presentations concerning Reggio at national, state and local conferences across the U.S. focused specifically on the Reggio Emilia approach to education. We caution interested educators that some workshops purporting to present material concerning the Reggio Emilia approach have not accurately reflected our experiences and philosophy. In order to ensure accurate representation of ideas concerning Reggio, we urge organizers of workshops, seminars and conferences concerning the Reggio Emilia approach, whether non-profit or for-profit, to coordinate their plans with Reggio Children, s.r.l., via Piazza della Vittoria 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy, phone: 011-39-522-455416, fax: 011-39-522-455621, e-mail: ***reggiochildren@reggiochildren.it***

The listing of conferences, workshops and various forms of video and printed materials is presented by the editors of Innovations *to assist readers who are interested in descriptions and interpretations of the Reggio program. All those listed below are regarded by Reggio Children, s.r.l., as consistent with the spirit and philosophy of the Reggio schools.*

California Innovative Teacher Project Roundtables: Inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach In Collaboration with Mills College

January 10-11, 2002: "The Watts Tower Exhibit," Mary Hartzell & Chris Roncal, First Presbyterian Nursery School, Santa Monica, CA • Location: Monterey Center for Children and Families, Monterey
Contact: Susan Bates, (831) 647-1880

February 8, 2003: "Making Learning Visible," Special Roundtable with Amelia Gambetti, Reggio Emilia, Italy Location: Presidio Child Development Center, San Francisco
Contact: Sandy Osborne, (415) 561-5822

April 26, 2003: "Image of the Child and Diversity" • Location: California State University, Fresno
Contact: Shareen Abramson, (559) 278-0226

May 17, 2003: "Image of the Child and the Reciprocal Role Between Parents and School" Location: C5, San Francisco
Contact: Bev Melugin, (415) 703-1277

June 17, 2003: "Image of the Child Within an Infant-Toddler Setting" • Location: Old Firehouse School, Lafayette
Contact: Dorothy Stewart, (924) 284-4321

For further information, contact:
Susan Lyon, Director
The Innovative Teacher Project
350 Bay St., Suite 100-352,
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 397-8211,
e-mail: slyon@mills.edu

Beyond My Eyes: Presented by Reggio Children in Collaboration with The Workshop • Merida, Yucatan, Mexico • Presenters: Amelia Gambetti, Lella Gandini & Caty Franco

January 17, 18 & 20, 2003: Introduction to the Reggio Emilia Approach
January 20-21, 2003: Advanced Reflections of the Reggio Emilia Approach
Contact: Sausan Bershan, c/o Falco • 6800 SW 40th St., Miami FL 33155
(305) 662-7276, ext. 715

First Presbyterian Nursery School
Santa Monica, CA
Half-Day Workshop: "Small Group Work," January 25, 2003
One-Day Learning Tours:
"Supporting Children's Literacy Through the Reggio Emilia Approach," TBA
"Creating a Classroom Identity," February 14, 2003
Educator Mornings: An Opportunity to Visit the School's Environment & Dialogue with Staff:
April 8 & June 10, 2003
Two-Day Learning Tour:
"Teachers as Researchers," May 23-24, 2003 • **Contact:** Chloë Jones, First Presbyterian Nursery School • (310) 451-9259, fax (310) 451-7271, e-mail: chloe@first-pres.net

Chicago Commons Child Development Program
Chicago, IL
Material Workshops: Wood and Paper: February 7, 2003
Clay: March 7 & 14, 2003
Contact: Kimberly Cothran, Professional Development Coordinator, (773) 826-4872, fax (773) 826-4174, e-mail: cothrank@chicagocommons.org

Innovations in Early Education: A Seminar Series for Early Childhood Educators
Wayne State University Detroit, MI
February 8, 2003: Lella Gandini, "Observation and Documentation of Children's Relationships, Communication and Learning Through Interpretation of their Experiences with the Hundred Languages"
April 5, 2003: Sally Roman & Sallie Boyle, "Reggio-Inspired Approaches to Literacy Development and Curriculum Standards" • 10% discount for **NAREA** members
Contact: Judith Allen Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute
(313) 872-1790,
e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu

St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Delegation Days • The College School, Clayton Schools' Family Center, The St. Michael School & Webster University • St. Louis, MO
April 10-12 & May 1-3, 2003
Contact: Michael Holohan, St. Louis-Reggio Collaborative Coordinator, (314) 324-4940, e-mail: mpholohan@earthlink.net , web site: www.reggiocollab.org

Parents as Protagonists in a Community of Learners
Boulder, CO • June 26-28, 2003
Presenters include Amelia Gambetti, Carlina Rinaldi and the faculty of The Boulder Journey School
10% discount for NAREA members
Contact: Ellen Hall, (303) 443-8909,
e-mail: ehall820@aol.com

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE REGGIO EMILIA EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

For a comprehensive listing of print and video resources related to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy, contact these organizations:

Council for Professional Recognition/Reggio Children USA
2460 16th St. NW,
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 424-4310, (202)265-9090,
fax (202) 265-9161
web site: http://www.cdacouncil.org

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education
University of Illinois, Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Dr., Champaign, IL 61820-7469
(800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386,
fax (217) 333-3767
e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu (Bernard Cesarone)
web site: http://ericeece.org/
Reggio Emilia section - http://ericeece.org/reggio.html

Merrill-Palmer Institute
Wayne State University
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(313) 872-1790,
fax (313) 875-0947
e-mail: j_a_kaminsky@wayne.edu (Judith Allen Kaminsky)
web site: http://www.mpi.wayne.edu

Reggio Children
Piazza della Vittoria, 6, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy
39-05220455416,
fax 39-0522-455621
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Co-owners: Judith Allen Kaminsky, Merrill-Palmer Institute (j_a_kaminsky @wayne.edu) and Bernard Cesarone, ERIC/EECE (cesarone@uiuc.edu). If you have questions about subscribing, contact: Bernard Cesarone at ERIC/ EECE • Voice: (800) 583-4135, (217) 333-1386 • e-mail: cesarone@uiuc.edu

NEW RESOURCES

Cecil, J., Cothran, K. & White, L. 2002. Changes in the environment through collaboration. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 147.

Edwards, C.P. & Raikes, H. 2002. Extending the dance: Relationship-based approaches to infant-toddler care and education. *Young Children*, 57 (4).

Gambetti, A. 2002. Safety issues. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 147.

Pelo, A. 2002. From borders to bridges: Transforming our relationships with parents. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 147.

Rinaldi, C. 2002. Research and learning. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 145.

Stremmel, A.J. 2002. Teacher research: Nurturing professional and personal growth through inquiry. *Young Children*. 57 (5).

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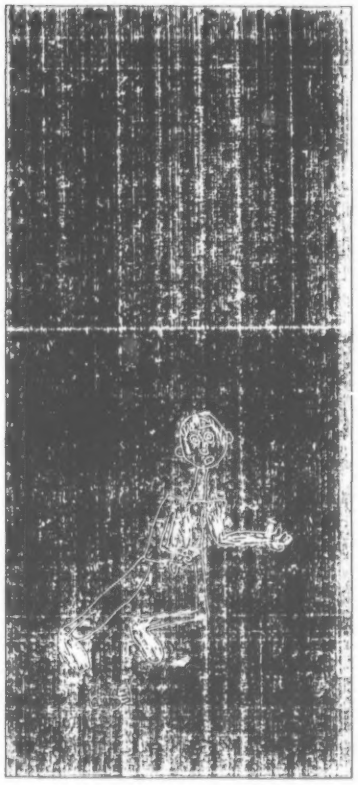

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